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THE EYE

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Aitken's daughter arrested over libel trial plot

By Kim Sengupta and Ian Burrell

IN A sensational development in the Jonathan Aitken affair, the former Tory minister's 17-year-old daughter was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Victoria Aitken was taken by her aunt from her father's home near the House of Commons to a central London police station where she was questioned in connection with his collapsed libel action.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police also arrested Said Ayas, 56, the Saudi millionaire, said to have paid Mr Aitken's bill at the Paris Ritz hotel in September 1993, an arrangement which proved to be the former minister's downfall.

Mr Ayas was then the business manager of Prince Mohammed bin Fahd, the son

of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Last night a member of the Aitken family disclosed to *The Independent* that they believed Mr Aitken's wife Lolita would also have been arrested yesterday, had she not been out of the country.

Mr Aitken's wife and daughter had both been due to give evidence in his libel action against *The Guardian*. They were due to support his claim that Mrs Aitken had paid the Ritz bill. Mr Ayas had provided Mr Aitken with a statement saying he had paid the bill.

Mr Aitken had always claimed that his own version of events was based on what he had been told by his wife and daughter. After studying written witness statements signed by the women, police officers travelled to Paris and Switzerland to examine the evidence.

The family member, who asked not to be identified, said: "We were expecting something like this [the arrest of Victoria Aitken] - it is all to do with the stay in Paris. She is not particularly upset about this, although it is not a pleasant experience for a young girl to go through. This has been hanging over the family for such a long time. It has got to be resolved."

Ms Aitken, who is studying for A-levels at a sixth-form college in Oxford, returned to the



Victoria Aitken (right) with her aunt, Maria Aitken, yesterday. Photograph: Michael Crabtree



Said Ayas. Also arrested

family home nearly four hours after leaving for the police station and was met by a crowd of photographers and reporters.

In a brief statement, Scotland Yard said: "A 17-year-old girl was interviewed at a London police station today at a previously arranged meeting. She was subsequently arrested on suspicion of conspiring to pervert the course of justice."

The arrests provided the latest twist in Mr Aitken's disastrous attempt to refute the allegations that he allowed Mr Ayas to pay his Ritz bill.

The minister's battle to clear his name using what he memorably described as "the simple sword of truth and the rusty shield of fair play" led to his humiliation as the case collapsed last June. He was forced to drop the action when lawyers acting for *The Guardian* and Granada Television produced evidence that Mrs Aitken had been in

Switzerland at the time she was supposed to have paid the bill.

The libel action, which began in 1995, was expected to lead to Mr Aitken's financial ruin but he was recently appointed to a position with defence giant GEC-Marconi.

Mr Aitken resigned as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in April 1995 to fight the libel action. He lost his seat at South Thanet, Kent, which he had represented since 1974, at the last election.

cover Information Research Department tried to win hearts and minds with a work which had proved "a most effective propaganda weapon" in the West.

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Murder case man tortured to death by Maze loyalists

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

DAVID Keys, the loyalist found hanging in the Maze, supposedly the UK's most secure penal institution, had been tortured and died a slow death.

The authorities believe he most probably died of strangulation before his loyalist associates strung him up and left him hanging in his cell. But first they spent time beating and severely abusing him with various home-made weapons, causing horrible injuries, before slashing his wrists.

He was found hanging in the prison on Sunday morning. He did not know it, but he was a dead man from the time he had been escorted into the Loyalist Volunteer Force wing a few days earlier. Last night an LVF prisoner at the Maze was arrested in connection with the death.

Damien Trainor, the friends shot dead in an LVF gun attack in a bar in the quiet Co Armagh village of Poyntzpass earlier this month. The killings received widespread publicity, principally because the two men killed, a Protestant and a Catholic, had had a lifelong friendship which transcended the sectarian divide.

Keys was no angel, being involved in both paramilitary activity and drug-trafficking. In common with quite a few involved in the drugs trade, he did business with both loyalists and republicans. This activity almost got him killed in November last, when he was shot as he sat in a car in east Belfast and was badly injured. A loyalist group was responsible.

But he survived and, if the security forces are correct, he drove the car used in the shooting of Philip Allen and Damien Trainor. Keys appeared in court on Wednesday, a detective telling the court that when charged he had replied: "Definitely not guilty, definitely not guilty to any of them murders." During the court appearance, according to one observer, "looked a bundle of nerves".

It seems that Keys, while under police interrogation, had given information to detectives. He must have known that this put him at risk from his LVF associates, but apparently believed they would either not know of this or would forgive him for it.

THE BUDGET GORDON OPENS THE BOX

Read the Budget '98 20-page section in tomorrow's *Independent* for all the details

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Sex claim 'mystifies' Clinton

By James Roberts

PRESIDENT CLINTON yesterday did his best to put as much distance as possible between himself and the woman who is possibly the most credible witness yet to testify about his sexual behaviour.

Kathleen Willey, 51, told on television on Sunday how, in November 1993, outside the Oval Office, Mr Clinton kissed her, touched her breast and put her hand on his genitals, as she asked him for a job.

Yesterday, speaking at a Maryland high school, Mr Clinton said he was "mystified and disappointed by this turn of events". Commenting on the alleged sexual encounter last summer, Mr Clinton said through his lawyer that he may have been trying to console Mrs Willey, whose family faced financial ruin. In his recent deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case he said he may have kissed Mrs Willey on the forehead because she was so distressed.

Mrs Willey was an early supporter of Mr Clinton with no apparent political axe to grind, and was originally reluctant to

come forward. It may make her a more credible witness than others who have accused the President of sexual harassment.

In 1992, Mrs Willey and her husband eagerly supported the Clinton-Gore ticket. She spent election night 1992 in Little Rock celebrating Mr Clinton's victory. A few weeks later, she began working as an unpaid volunteer in the White House social office.

The Senate Majority leader Trent Lott said Mrs Willey appeared believable in her televised statements.

Clinton defence, page 10

THE FOREIGN Office tried to use a cartoon version of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* to counter the spread of post-war communism in British colonies in the Middle East and the Far East, according to documents released yesterday.

In 1950, as the Cold War began to take hold, the authorities grew increasingly concerned that Russia and China were trying to extend their influence in colonies such as Singapore, what was then Malaya and Egypt. So Christopher Mayhew's under-

Four legs good in the Cold War

By John Crossland

cover Information Research Department tried to win hearts and minds with a work which had proved "a most effective propaganda weapon" in the West.

Cartoonist Norman Pett and scriptwriter Don Freeman were called in to create the cartoons, but soon ran up against the Foreign Office's lack of flexibility. Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Sheridan insisted on a "regular drill" to ensure prompt delivery of the cartoon at his secret headquarters. "I have already begun sending out the strips to my various clients and you will appreciate the importance of being regular."

As the secret files from the Public Record office reveals, the cartoonists also ran into problems with their designs for the farmyard animals. Sheridan complained that Boxer "the faithful, steady, plodding cart horse... looks too pansy. He looks almost as effeminate as Pretty Polly herself."

The cartoon was not successful. Baffled by the lack of interest in Egypt, the IRD cabled the Cairo embassy, saying: "We suggest that a local artist convert oak trees into palms and substitute feathers for bowler hats and turn skirts in sarongs."

Computer buffs forge ahead for an easy buck

By David Usborne
In New York

THE AMERICAN dollar has a new enemy. It lurks in homes all across the land and is multiplying steadily. It is the personal computer, alias PC. Or rather the computer and its co-conspirator, the ink-jet printer.

To the dismay of the US Treasury, increasing numbers of citizens are making a common discovery: that even inexpensive home PCs can be used to turn

out more or less convincing counterfeit money.

Images of the banknotes, whether in \$100 denominations or lower, are freely available on the Internet. Any computer-savvy person can download them and print them. An alternative is to scan in a real banknote.

So easy, a child could do it? Certainly. Among the hundreds of cases of computer-forging turning up across the country, many involve school pupils

found to have printed out just a few, sometimes simply for a dare.

Matthew Hagens, 16, of Long Island, New York, was arrested last month, for instance, for passing a fake \$10 note to buy bubble gum. He found the images from an Internet chat room, police said.

Robert Rubin, US Treasury Secretary, wants longer sentences to be available in forgery cases. His department calculates that while computer-

created notes represented about 1 per cent of counterfeit money in circulation in the US three years ago, the proportion has grown to 4.3 per cent, and is rising.

Writing to a government commission that sets sentences, Mr Rubin said: "Traditional law-enforcement methods, as well as the sentencing guidelines, must be adapted to meet the challenges created by this ever-changing technology."

The computer-forgers are

difficult for police to discover and then effectively to charge. While it is hard to explain away an off-set printer and gallons of green ink, the modern forger has nothing more incriminating than a PC and printer. There may just be a floppy disc with images of banknotes on it, but only if investigators are lucky.

The notes will usually fool a shopkeeper but will generally be spotted as a fake by any bank. The Treasury is to launch a

nationwide campaign to educate people, shopkeepers especially, on how to spot cyber-money.

One tip: be suspicious if the ink smudges or if the paper feels wrong. The Treasury does not print its money on paper bought from the local stationers.



5 facts about Gerry Adams

1. He was born in 1945 in the Dublin suburb of Ballyboghila.
2. He was a member of the IRA and was involved in the 1981 hunger strike.
3. He was elected to the Dáil in 1981 and has been a member of the cabinet since 1989.
4. He was elected Taoiseach in 1994 and has been in office since then.
5. He is married to Mary and has three children.

NEWS
weeknights at 7pm on 5

PEOPLE LIKE NEWS

Radio 4 defies sceptics as new schedule claims high ground

By Rob Brown
Media Editor

ANY fears that BBC Radio 4 is to be dumbed down were laid to rest yesterday when its new controller, James Boyle, ended months of speculation by unveiling a new schedule which is indisputably highbrow.

Extra episodes of *The Archers* and *Woman's Hour* will be backed by more drama, more current affairs, more books programmes and more comedy in a programming line-up which Mr Boyle described as positively Reithian.

To reinforce the point that there has been no abandonment of traditional standards at the mainly speech-based service, many of Radio 4's most high-profile presenters - including Melvyn Bragg from *Start the Week*, James Naughtie from *Today*, Jeoni Murray of *Woman's Hour* and Ned Sherrin - were present at the launch at Broadcasting House.

They will soon be joined by John Peel, Kate Adie, Michael Buerk and Martin Bashir (who interviewed Diana, Princess of Wales for *Panorama*), who have been given prominent roles in the new line-up.

The only people noticeably unhappy yesterday were members of the BBC's broadcasting union, angry about job cuts. Seventy posts are to go in topical features and 30 will be axed in Manchester and Bristol.

But Mr Boyle did not let the union's veiled threat of industrial action mar his carefully rehearsed unveiling of the new schedule to a packed press conference. "It's the richest schedule ever," he proudly proclaimed as a slick audiovisual presentation listed the changes.

As expected, a number of long-running strands are being axed, including *Face the Facts*, *Afternoon Shift*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Mediumwave* and *Sport on 4*. Religious listeners will have to get up at 5.45am to hear the *Morning Prayer*. The *Morning Service* will also start earlier on Sundays. Moral dilemmas will be explored by Michael Buerk

in a new interview programme called *The Choice*. Jonathan Dimbleby will grill a major public figure for an imaginary new challenge in *The Candidate*. Kate Adie will become the first permanent presenter of *From Our Own Correspondent*.

There will be several family orientated new strands, including *Home Truths*, which will be presented by John Peel, who made his name as an alternative music DJ on Radio 1.

The network's flagship *Today* news programme is being stretched to three hours and there were assurances that its content will not become "more fluffy", as some papers had speculated. However, its content will be adapted in an attempt to hook occasional listeners.

Steve Mitchell, deputy head of news programmes, said: "Some people don't use us as much as they should. They believe in news terms we are a rather staid and stuffy perception."

That is still a perception of Radio 4 in general, its controller conceded yesterday. Mr Boyle said the network's po-faced and pro-establishment reputation worried him "more than the Rajar figures", a reference to the quarterly audits of listening figures which show that Radio 4's audience is predominantly old and dwindling.

"We need to persuade more people that Radio 4 is worth listening to," Mr Boyle said. "But I've got to maintain the intelligence and variety of programmes, otherwise it won't be Radio 4." He described the new schedule as Reithian, a reference to the BBC's founding supremo, a fellow Scot who committed the corporation to a triple mission to inform, educate and entertain.

"It's the views of the listener which have shaped the new schedule and it's the best ever," Mr Boyle said, confidently forecasting that the changes would "reinforce Radio 4's position as the home of quality, intelligent and engrossing speech radio - the richest speech network in the world."



BBC stars at Broadcasting House yesterday: Clockwise from left: Kate Adie, Tommy Pearson, Lars Tharp, James Naughtie, John Waite, Trevor Harrison, Donald Sinden, Niamh Cusack, John Humphrys. Photograph: Andrew Burman

Smith warns BBC over lottery show

THE BBC got a stern warning from the Government yesterday about its involvement in a new lottery scratchcard game which has been widely condemned as "the biggest gambling show in history", writes Rob Brown.

In response to an emergency motion in the House of Commons, Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, told the chairman and governors of the corporation to make sure plans for the controversial programme do not breach its own charter.

The public broadcasting service had earlier been accused by Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the Select Committee on Culture, of violating its own guidelines and contravening "its very basis of existence" by promoting the game entitled *TV Dreams*.

Conservative Culture spokesman Francis Maude said the BBC had shown "how far beyond the limits of the charter the programme is" through its own "eleventh hour" decision to withdraw its name from promotional material for the programme. Television com-

mercials and billboards oow make no mention of the new show. But it remains the case that the contestants must purchase a scratchcard.

The BBC's producer guidelines warn against competitions which "risk being interpreted as gambling or a lottery". They state that the Lotteries and Amusements Act of 1976 may be contravened if "a viewer competition is based on a game of chance and some sort of donation, purchase or contribution is made".

Although the BBC has stated that it will comply with

the terms of these guidelines, church organisations have joined politicians in condemning the BBC's *National Lottery Big Ticket Show*, which will be launched on 28 March.

Mr Smith said yesterday that he was "not exonerating" the BBC and added: "I will personally expect the chairman and governors of the BBC to examine very carefully the provision of their charter and agreement, which they are there to uphold, to ensure that the plans for this programme do not breach in any way these provisions."

Dr Spock, who threw out the childcare rule book, dies at 94

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor



Benjamin Spock: Midwife to the flower children

ALL YOU need is kindness, said Dr Benjamin Spock. The childcare expert who played midwife to the flower children of the Sixties died quietly on Sunday, aged 94, at his home in California, having helped a generation of post-war parents dump the rigid strictures on child rearing they had been told to follow and learn how to relax.

Despite his huge success as an author - his books sold 50 million copies around the world - he died burdened by debt. Recently his wife, Mary Morgan, appealed for help to pay his medical bills which were running at \$125,000 (£78,000) a year.

The six-foot-four-inch former psychiatrist, who once confessed he over kissed his own sons, told parents not to be overawed by experts and not to listen to everything the neighbours said. His approach was based on putting parents at the centre of child rearing. "Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do," was his message.

It was eagerly received. Advice manuals of the time gave instructions about when to pick up the baby (or more often when not to), when to put down, when to feed and how to discipline. Dr Spock urged parents to follow their instincts. "We know for a fact that the natural loving care that kindly parents give their children is a hundred times more valuable," he said.

His first book, *Commonsense about Babies and Children*, published in 1946, and those that followed were translated into 30 languages. His success was so great that he was accused of being the father of permissiveness and of having produced a "Spock-marked generation of hippies".

The childbirth campaigner and author Sheila Kitzinger said yesterday: "He was a rad-

ical. He learnt from mothers by watching what they really did. He told them to trust their own feelings. No one had ever said that to mothers before."

Later, Dr Spock joined the generation he was accused of producing in protests against the Vietnam war and nuclear power. He ran for president in 1972 as a candidate of the People's Party, but polled less than 1 per cent of the votes. In his mid-seventies, he started psychoanalysis, an emotionally demanding process normally confined to the under-forties, demonstrating his appetite for self-renewal.

Although he was later accused of having recanted and taken a more moralistic tone, there is little evidence for it. "Nothing I have read suggested he wanted to expose children to strict discipline," Ms Kitzinger said.

He himself was clear about his views. "I may as well let the cat out of the bag right away as far as my opinion goes and say that strictness or permissiveness is not the real issue. Good-hearted parents who aren't afraid to be firm when it is necessary can get good results with either moderate strictness or moderate permissiveness. On the other hand, a strictness that comes from harsh feelings or a permissiveness that is timid or vacillating can each lead to poor results."

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Aisle be damned - Sarah's sticking close to her man

IN THE NEWS
SARAH MACAULAY

FOR more than a year, gossip columnists have been confidently predicting that Gordon Brown and his girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, are "soon to marry". But when the Chancellor holds his briefcase aloft for the television cameras in Downing Street this afternoon, Ms Macaulay will not be at his side writes Kathy Marks.

At 47, Mr Brown is not about to be bounced by public opinion into tying the knot, as he made clear in an interview with *The Independent* on Sunday at the weekend. But Ms Macaulay, according to friends, is equally adamant that if the couple do ever decide to get married, it will be for their own private reasons and at a time that suits them.

Friends believe that they are uncommonly well suited, temperamentally and ideologically - quite apart from being patently smitten with one another.

Ms Macaulay, 34, has impeccable New Labour credentials. The public relations consultancy that she runs with Julia Hobsbawm, daughter of Eric, the Marxist historian, was founded on the philosophy of "integrity PR" and has organised numerous fund-raising events for the Labour Party.

On a personal level, she is cast in a similar mould to the Chancellor. Both are serious-



Waiting game: Sarah Macaulay is happy to hang on for the right moment to marry. Photograph: Barry Bland

mined people. Where he is thought out, she is seen as aloof. Certainly, she is self-sufficient, reserved, even cool, although those close to her insist she is warm-hearted and "good fun" in private.

There is one other similarity. Like Mr Brown, Ms Macaulay is formidably intelligent, a trait that has been ap-

parent since her early teens, according to teachers at Acland Burghley, the comprehensive she went to in north London.

Joe Kusner, who taught her art for four years, said yesterday: "You had the impression that she only needed to glance at something in order to learn it. She was particularly interested in the history of art, and

she was expounding her own theories at the age of 13 or 14.

"There was one art history teacher who was quite intimidated by Sarah because she knew so much and would try to catch her out."

Ms Macaulay spent part of her childhood living in Tanzania. Later her parents split up and she lived with her mother and two younger brothers in north London, but spent summers with her Scottish father in Fife. She took A-levels at Camden Girls School, where she first met Ms Hobsbawm, and read psychology at Bristol University.

At the agency, which the two women set up five years ago, Ms Macaulay is managing director and runs much of the day-to-day business as well as her own projects. She likes classical music, American crime fiction, working out at the gym, and is a member of Soho House, the private club favoured by New Labour, where she has been seen dining with Mr Brown.

Ms Hobsbawm said: "Sarah is very passionate politically and morally. She's got a very strong work ethic and strong principles, but she's good company socially. She can be one of the girls."

She and the Chancellor have been "an item" for nearly three years and spend much of their spare time together, including weekends at his house in Scotland.

But apart from a couple of photo-calls, they conduct their relationship in privacy. As one friend said yesterday: "It's very close, it's very happy; that's all there is to it."

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DELL

Newcastle disunited as football soap takes seedy twist

By Simon Turnbull

THE sign above the main entrance to St James' Park stood large and bold. Yesterday, however, Newcastle was anything but united. Tyneside had once again been thrown into turmoil by its resident soap-opera: Newcastle United Football Club.

Tony Banks even made a guest appearance as the latest episode continued to unfold yesterday. "I'm looking for a very strong denial that the claims concerned are not true," the sports minister said, "but if they are true it's a very sad day for Newcastle."

The world beyond Tyneside might have thought it was sad when 20,000 locals crammed into the car park at the football ground just to see Alan Shearer stand on a balcony wearing the black and white strip of Newcastle United for the first time - or when life in Newcastle ground to a grief-stricken halt the day Kevin Keegan, the permed messiah who saved the club from extinction and led it to the promised land of the FA Carling Premiership, suddenly upped and left for pastures new.

Keegan and Shearer both feature in the new script of Tyneside's ongoing football farce, though the alleged description of the Geordie icons as - respectively - Shirley Temple and Mary Poppins was the least damaging of the less than neighbourly remarks attributed to Freddie Shepherd, Newcastle United's chairman, and Douglas Hall, the club's vice chairman, in a Sunday newspaper article.



RAWBERRY PLACE

Alleged boasts of a scoring spree in the hothouses of Europe, of fleeing fans for £45 on each £50 replica shirt and deriding Tyneside women as "dogs" had Newcastle decidedly disunited yesterday.

It also had the Prime Minister, a confirmed supporter of Newcastle United, "very concerned", according to Sir Jeremy Beecham, a former leader of Newcastle City Council and a visitor to 10 Downing Street yesterday.

Nor was Mr Blair's sporting aide, Mr Banks, slow to express his concern about the article in the *News of the World*. He said: "If what is claimed was actually said the views are disturbing and quite frankly will anger all

decent fans because there is the feeling around the country that some fans do get ripped off by some clubs in terms of replica kit. "If these views as reported are true then quite frankly it will confirm some of the worst beliefs

that some football supporters have about the way they are treated." Mr Shepherd and Mr Hall, however, were conspicuously silent and conspicuously absent from Newcastle yesterday. They were attending an emergency board

Mutiny in the ranks: Disgruntled Newcastle fans - the self-styled Toon Army - at the club's ground St James' Park yesterday as a board meeting was held at a secret location to discuss allegations that chairman Freddie Shepherd (right, top) and vice-chairman Douglas Hall (bottom) boasted about fleeing fans and claimed that North-east womenfolk were all 'dogs'.



Main photograph: Will Walker

meeting of the football club. The location was secret, but not the item on the top of the agenda.

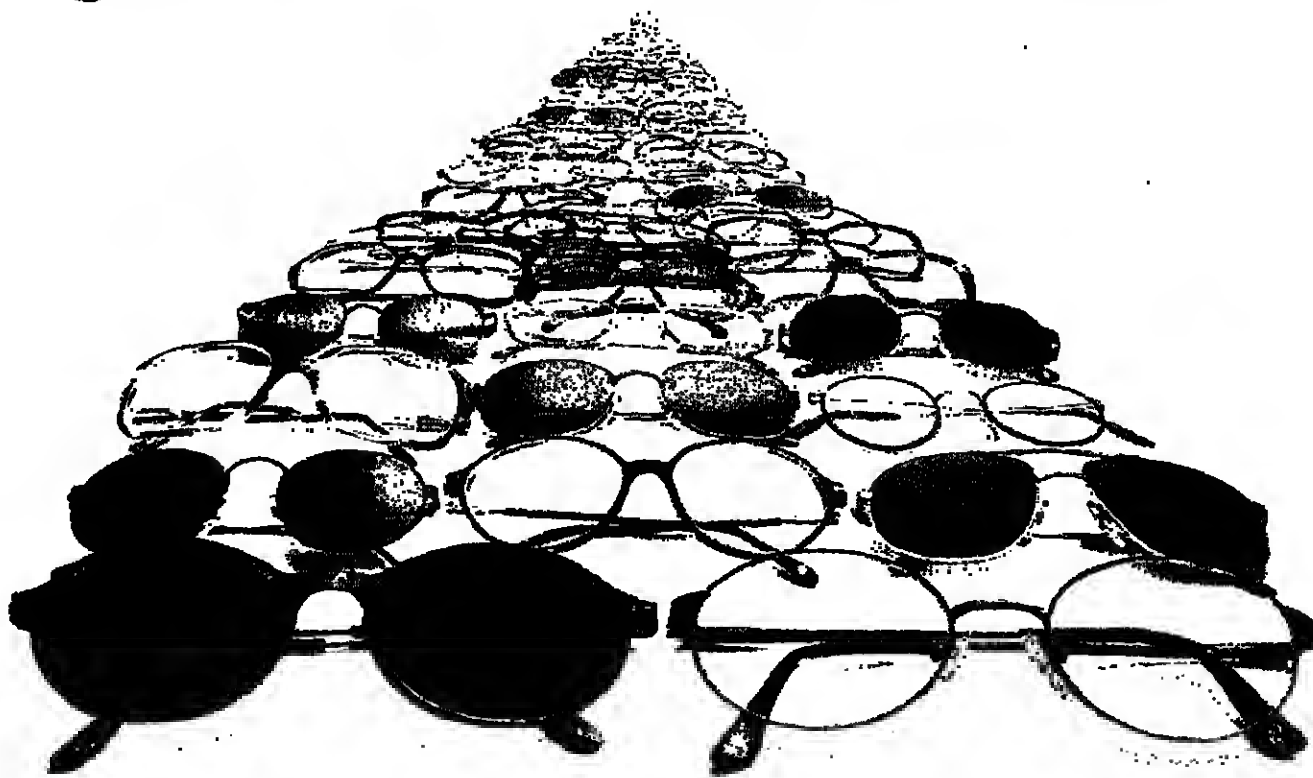
Newcastle United plc opened for trading on the stock market yesterday at 84p per share, 6p down. With more than £9m having been knocked off the club's valuation at the stroke of a Sunday newspaper pen, the question was whether the chairman and the vice-chairman would have to go.

Maybe not, the sound of silence emanating from St James' Park suggested. Yes, 90 per cent of callers to BBC Radio Newcastle's phone-in show poll insisted. Two said they would be sending back their season tickets in disgust; one called for Keegan's appointment as chairman. Surprisingly, only Julie from Dipton spoke up for Tyneside's slighted womenfolk. "How can they slag us off when they look as ugly as they do?" she demanded.

Away from the red-hot airwaves, there was support for the allegedly errant sons of Tyneside. Mark Jensen, editor of *The Mag*, a fanzine devoted to Newcastle United, said: "I don't think they should resign and I don't think they will. Every football fan knows that replica shirts are a rip off. If Newcastle have been selling them to subsidise Alan Shearer it's fine by me."

Shearer, the England captain, is depicted on the front cover of *The Mag*'s latest edition as the *Angel of the North*, the huge steel sculpture erected in Gateshead last month. Yesterday he was keeping his thoughts - angelic or otherwise - to himself.

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OPTICIANS

Grant cuts no barrier to student excesses

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

WHEN it comes to drinking vast quantities of alcohol, agricultural students would get a first for effort, while those studying the arts and social sciences come top in the dope-smoking department, according to a survey of 10 universities.

A drugs conference will hear today that physics students are among the most likely to experiment with drugs other than cannabis, and future doctors, dentists and vets are some of the biggest consumers of LSD.

Analysis of a survey of 3,700 second-year university students provides a fascinating insight into the drinking, smoking and drug habits of the different college faculties.

Top of the drinking league are biological science students - mainly those studying agriculture - 23 per cent of whom exceed the "hazardous" level.

Students from all faculties exceeded the weekly "low risk" drinking limit of 10.5 pints a week for men and seven for women. Veterinary and medical students were the most moderate boozers. Binge drinking - more than five pints in one evening - was most commonplace among biological science students, which resulted in some of them missing lectures three times a month.

Professor Heather Ashton, of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, one of the report's co-authors, said: "This tells us that students drink one hell of a lot. Despite complaining about not having any money, they certainly seem to have enough when it comes to alcohol."

Cannabis was the most popular illegal drug, with experiences ranging from 71 per cent in arts students to 42 per cent in veterinary science students.

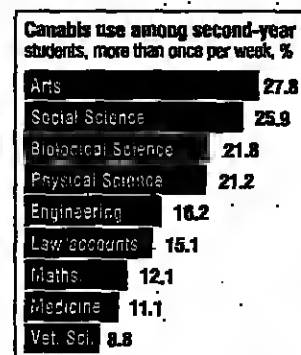
On the question of the use of all drugs, faculties of art (71 per cent), social science (70 per cent), biological sciences (67 per cent) and physical sciences (64 per cent) were the highest.

After cannabis the most

popular drug was LSD, with about half of engineering, law, mathematics, accountancy, medicine and dentistry students having tried it. Amphetamine, or "speed" was used by social scientists and art students.

Professor Ashton said: "This was popular at exam time as it helped students stay awake revising all night."

Surprisingly, researchers found little evidence that students became stressed by the amount of their drug taking and drinking, or by the debts they ran up paying for these activities. Their love lives and examination pressures were the most stressful aspects of university. The students who were least stressed were those



with high alcohol consumption and who played a lot of sports - which may explain the relaxed demeanour of university rugby club members.

The report also noted that most students had developed their drug and drinking habits before going to university. "The choice of degree course by a student may be influenced by his/her personal characteristics which also affect the type of lifestyle pursued," it said.

Smoking tobacco was greatest in biological science, arts, and social science students, of which about a third regularly had a cigarette.

Analysis of the survey's findings, which was completed last year, but has not been published in a national newspaper before, will be discussed at a conference today at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in London. The event is part of the London Study Safety Campaign organised by London Drug Action Teams.

A check on passports

TRAVELLERS leaving the United Kingdom will no longer have their passports checked, a Home Office minister announced yesterday.

Mike O'Brien said that the checks, which cost £3m per year, were "an expensive fiction". They would be replaced by improved closed-circuit television and by targeted, intelligence-led operations designed to catch criminals and child-abductors.

Mr O'Brien also disclosed yesterday that under a 1991 rule change, asylum-seekers who had waited seven years for a decision were automatically considered for *Exceptional Leave* to remain here. However, he denied reports that there were plans for an amnesty of all 75,000 backlogged cases.

Alarm success for prostitute

ONE OF the personal alarms issued by police to Glasgow prostitutes has saved a 21-year-old woman from possible attack, it emerged yesterday.

A prostitute in the city's red-light district became the first to use the alarm after a man started threatening her, said police, who detained a man over the incident. The police added that the incident showed the value of the devices issued two weeks ago by detectives investigating the murder of Glasgow prostitute Margo Lafferty, 27.

Rail misery

COMPLAINTS from passengers on privatised train services have soared to record levels, it was revealed yesterday.

Many passengers still face "totally unacceptable levels of disruption to their daily journeys", said the London Regional Passengers Committee.

The committee, which covers 19 of the 25 train companies, received a 20.5 per cent rise in complaints about main line and London Underground services in the last three months of 1997.

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Straw to meet Lawrence parents after racial questions halt inquiry

By Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

THE inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence was dramatically halted yesterday after suggestions that the chairman of the hearing had shown that he was insensitive to race issues.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, will meet the black teenager's parents, Neville and Doreen, today to discuss their concerns about criticisms contained in a newspaper report which outlined a number of cases in which Sir William Macpherson, the retired judge, was supposed to have been racially insensitive.

The move came on the first day of the inquiry in London which is expected to last up to three months and is seen as one of the most important

at last year's inquest into Stephen's murder at which Doreen Lawrence had claimed the whole justice system, from the initial investigation to the Old Bailey trial of three men, "had let them down".

"They felt there were serious deficiencies at all stages," Mr Mansfield said.

"It is against this background that they wish to take this unusual step," he added.

Stephen, an 18-year-old A-level student, was stabbed to death in April 1993 waiting for a bus in Eltham, south-east London, by a gang of white youths.

On Friday, the Police Complaints Authority revealed it had recommended that a senior serving police officer involved in the case should face a disciplinary charge of neglect of duty. Nobody has been convicted of the murder despite a criminal trial and a private prosecution.

Among the incidents cited against Sir William was that a study of judicial reviews in immigration cases by 15 different judges in 1987 found that he had the highest rate of refusal. It was cited that in another case cited he ruled that a white parent could withdraw a child from a class with a large number of Asian children.

Sir William said the article had not checked its facts.

"I mention it only to dismiss the personal allegations with contempt."

He said the article referred to cases he had handled "eight, nine, 10" years ago.

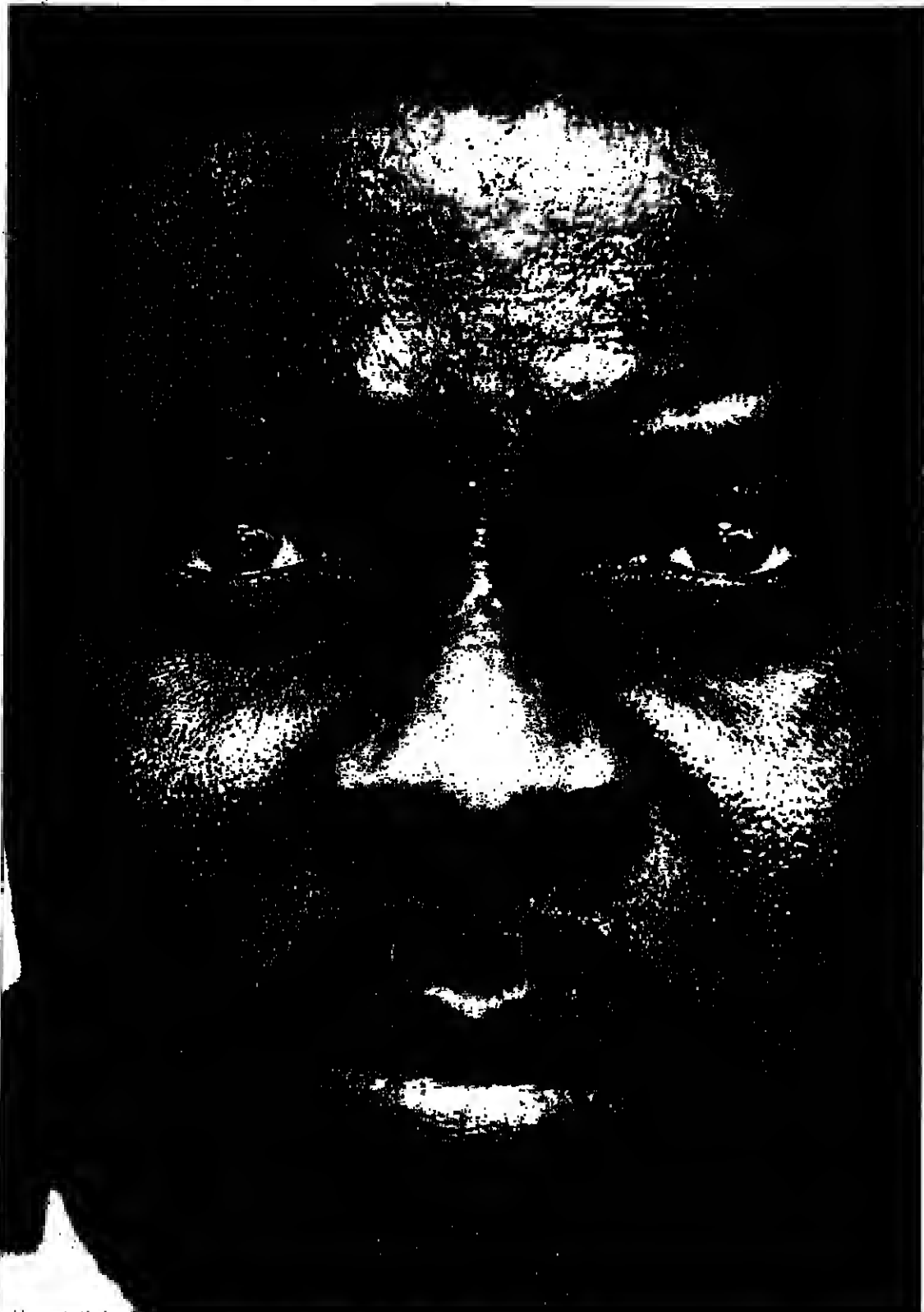
Sir William said he was concerned about claims about the inquiry itself, "namely the suggestion that I have denied access to documents to one party or the other."

"This is wholly untrue. That is a reflection not only on myself, but on my advisers and staff. I resent and deny the allegation."

Sir William has written to the editor of the *Observer* "expressing dissatisfaction" with the article.

After granting Mr Mansfield's application for an adjournment so the Lawrence family can meet the Home Secretary, Sir William said: "In view of the fact that my own position is to be discussed it is wise and sensible I should say no more."

A spokeswoman for the *Observer* said today: "We give careful consideration to all complaints and will comment further in due course."



Concern: Stephen's father, Neville Lawrence, is to meet Home Secretary Jack Straw Photograph: Reuters



Stephen Lawrence (right) and Sir William Macpherson Photograph: Reuters

race investigations carried out since the Scarman inquiry into the Brixton riots in 1981.

Sir William yesterday attacked the article in the *Observer* newspaper, which he dismissed "with contempt" and later disclosed he was considering legal action.

The inquiry was postponed until next Tuesday.

Mr Straw said yesterday: "The Lord Chancellor and I have complete confidence in Sir William's ability to conduct this inquiry with fairness and sensitivity," he said.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for Stephen's parents, told the hearing his clients had "very legitimate concerns about the inquiry and these concerns they wish to discuss with the Home Secretary prior to any inquiry actually beginning".

He referred to a statement made

Think-tanks roll into battle

What is the Smith Institute? "We don't know anything about it at all. I've never heard of it," said a member of the Policy Unit at Labour's Millbank headquarters. Nor had Professor Anantya Sen, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, heard of it when he was invited to lead one of a series of policy sessions sponsored by the institute to be held at No 11 Downing Street. Any suggestion that this is an aspiring alternative think-tank to the No 10 Policy Unit's own, led by Geoff Mulgan of Demos fame, is strictly Pandora's.

Another 70s taste crime

Pandora has received an irresistible invitation for this Thursday. Vogue night club on Wardour Street is offering something called "70s line dancing". Line dancing, right, is sometimes called "waltzing for manure kickers" as it is performed by cowboys and cowgirls to their favourite C&W songs. When Pandora asked a club organiser what was particularly noteworthy about "70s" line dancing as opposed to, say, line dancing in 1986 or 1997, no cogent answer was forthcoming.



Murdoch's new friend?

Rupert Murdoch, the well-known Sinophile, was in London recently. As is his custom, he spent a considerable amount of his time visiting Wapping. But far less customary was the breakfast he held with the Leader of the Opposition. According to one predictably objective Tory source, Murdoch found the Boy Wooster "very impressive". Was it the way he ate up all his Cocoa Pops?

Cuddly toy ... pork bellies

First *Newsweek* turned us into a bestselling cover story with "Cool Britain". Now another American magazine is seeking to increase its circulation on the back of Blighty. A recent issue of *BusinessWeek* leads with "The City of London - Why It's The Center of Global Finance". The cover picture features a London trader in his colourful jacket bearing the obligatory photo ID badge. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the badge photograph is not of the jolly trader but none other than comedian Bruce Forsyth. What a marvellous tribute, Bruce, to your 50 years in showbiz.

Pandora

Doctors warn of injuries from acupuncture

By Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

ACUPUNCTURE, the alternative therapy chosen because it is natural and holistic, is not as safe as people think, researchers say.

Serious complications have occurred in at least 300 cases in the last 30 years, according to a worldwide review of research. Experts say the true scale of the problem is likely to be much greater because of "huge" under-reporting.

Injuries have been caused as a result of inadequate understanding of anatomy by the acupuncturist combined with "aggressive needling". The commonest serious injury is pneumothorax - piercing of the chest cavity causing the lung to collapse. Other injuries include damage to the heart, spine and skin by inappropriately placed needles.

More than 1 million adults in Britain are estimated to have had acupuncture, 3 per cent of the population. It is widely used to treat pain, including headache and

arthritis, and for nausea, to help weight loss and to assist recovery from stroke.

The findings of the review of safety, by Dr Hagen Rampes of the South Kensington and Chelsea Medical Health Centre, were presented to a conference in Looe yesterday. Dr Rampes said it was important to understand the risks of the procedure because it was becoming more popular and was used increasingly in the NHS. Last year Prince Charles appealed for alternative therapies including acupuncture to be made more widely available.

Dr Rampes said reports of life threatening complications from acupuncture had been made since 1965. They included delayed or missed diagnoses, deterioration while undergoing the treatment, pain caused by the needles, and drowsiness which could affect driving. Infections caused by dirty needles had led to cases of hepatitis - an outbreak was reported at a north London clinic last month - septicaemia and perichondritis (inflammation of the cartilage).

Serious adverse reactions were esti-

mated at between one in 10,000 and one in 100,000, he said. Normally they would be dealt with by hospital doctors and in many cases these failed to take a proper history which revealed the cause of the problem.

He said acupuncturists needed to know about anatomy but there was no system of registration or requirement to undergo training. "These injuries can be prevented with proper training and prudent and cautious needling."

Professor Edward Ernst, head of the department of complementary medicine at the University of Exeter, said: "Acupuncture is not totally safe. We know of serious side effects but we are at a loss to establish how frequently they occur. Under-reporting must be huge." He said acupuncture associations should establish their own registration and training system.

He added that the technique was still likely to be safer than drugs. "More people die of aspirin than of acupuncture needles. The acupuncturist is more dangerous than the acupuncture."

Newborn baby strangled

DETECTIVES investigating the death of a newborn baby found discarded in a bin bag outside a children's theme park said yesterday that the child had been strangled.

Police launched a murder inquiry after the child's body was discovered on Saturday by a man walking his dog. Detective Chief Inspector John Hester said a post mortem carried out on the body of baby "Callum", found dumped in a wooded area next to Gulliver's World in Warrington, Cheshire, confirmed the cause of death as strangulation. He appealed for help from the public, and said he was disappointed with the response so far. "This lack of news about the mother suggests three possible scenarios," he added. "One, that she is somehow involved in Callum's death; two, that she is now too ill to come forward; or three, that someone else may have disposed of the body and that person is holding the mother against her will."

Mugger's sword attack

A MUGGING victim had his right hand partially severed after he was attacked by a man with a sword, police said yesterday. West Midlands Police said the unnamed man, aged 31, underwent an emergency operation to sew on the hand after being attacked in Foleshill, Coventry, on Friday.

A spokesman said the attacker, who was black and in his late-twenties, produced the weapon after his victim refused to hand over the contents of his pockets. He added that the injured man, who is recovering in hospital, had raised his hand to protect himself from the sword.

DAILY POEM

Displaced Person Looks at a Cage-Bird
by D J Enright

Every single day, going to where I stay
(how long?), I pass the canary
In the window. Big bird, all pranked out,
Looming and booming in the window's blank.

Closing a pawky eye, tapping its hairy chest,
flexing a brawny wing.
Every single day, coming from where I stay
(How long?), I pass this beastly thing.

How I wish it were dead!
- Florid, complacent, rent-free and overfed,
Feather-bedded, pensioned, free from wear and tear,
Earth has not anything to show less fat.

I do wish it were dead!
Then I'd write a better poetry,
On that poor wee bird, its feet in the air,
An innocent victim of something. Just like me.

This week's poems celebrate D J Enright's half century as a published poet and come from his new *Collected Poems 1948-1998* (Oxford University Press, £15). Enright taught English for many years in the Far East and Egypt, and has also worked as a publisher, critic and editor. This poem first appeared in *Some Men are Brothers* (1960).

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U-turn as veterans get Gulf illness test

By Ian Sirell

THE first official clinical tests of Gulf war veterans have been ordered by the Government more than seven years after the end of the conflict.

Until now, the only studies aimed at discovering the causes of so-called Gulf War Syndrome have been epidemiological, with veterans and serving soldiers being asked to

formed part of the Government's New Beginning programme, launched in July, and aimed at winning back the confidence of the veterans.

But the minister's announcement quickly ran into controversy as it emerged that the two-year clinical study is to be overseen by Professor Simon Wessely of King's College School of Medicine, in London.

Professor Wessely, a psychiatrist, has already angered veterans by claiming that they are just as healthy as the rest of the population. He has already been commissioned by the American government to run a US\$1m epidemiological study into Gulf illnesses in Britain.

Tony Flint, of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association said: "This study is five years too late. We have already lost 160 guys. It also worries me that Professor Wessely is on record as saying that Gulf veterans are healthier than the average person."

Victims of Gulf war illnesses experience debilitating illnesses including chronic fatigue, muscle wastage and depression. Many veterans blame their condition on the cocktail of vaccinations and tablets taken by personnel in the Gulf. Some were also exposed to pesticide sprays.

Around 1,600 veterans may take legal action against the Ministry of Defence.

Richard Barr, of Norfolk solicitors Dawbarns, said clinical testing of 40 veterans was under way.

"Our own studies should be completed well before the end of the year and hopefully we will have some answers before these government trials have even started."



John Reid: Change of tack by the Government

fill out questionnaires on their health and Gulf experiences.

These studies have been received with hostility by many veterans - who regard them as slanted - and dogged by the difficulties of tracing sufficient respondents.

Yesterday in a change of tack, the armed forces minister John Reid said a group of randomly selected veterans will be subjected to clinical testing.

He said it would provide a "thorough and objective assessment" of the veterans' conditions. "My decision to fund this research... underlines my commitment to address Gulf veterans' concerns sympathetically and seriously," he said.

He said the £250,000 study



Sparkling: Susan Martin, organiser of Diana, Princess of Wales, A Tribute in Dress - a charity ball, fashion show and auction evening set for 29 May in Oswestry, Shropshire, - with a royal gown to go on show at the event, which was announced at Christie's, London, yesterday Photograph: Rul Xavier

Mobile phone alert for drivers

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

DRIVERS should refrain from using hand-held mobile phones, the Government has warned. Baroness Hayman, the road safety minister, yesterday launched a campaign to warn motorists off them and published new guidelines on their use.

The guidelines, drawn up by the Federation of Communication Services, say that drivers should never hold a phone while driving. Ministers are keen to act now before phones in cars become so popular that drivers feel their rights are being infringed.

Although there were fewer than one million mobile phones in use in 1993, experts say that by 2003 there will be nearly 13 million - one for every two cars.

Changes to the design of many cars' interiors are on the way. Many manufacturers have been installing moulded arm-rest fittings to hold phones. Experts say these too can disturb concentration, but they are less likely to distract.

Many people argue mobile phones have become necessary for their work. Edmund King, a Royal Automobile Club spokesman, agrees. "Used responsibly, they should cause no real distraction to the driver or danger to other road users," he said.

Suds set to fly in soap giants' revolution

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

IT COULD revolutionise the way we wash our clothes as much as the tea bag turned the tea market on its head. Britain's leading detergent manufacturers are planning a tablet that could replace washing powder.

The suds are bound to fly as both Lever Brothers and Procter & Gamble plan to bring out their own version of the tablet later this year, adding more fuel to the ongoing soap wars.

Traditionally detergent has been sold in powder or liquid form. The advantage of the tablet is that it would allow people to use the correct dose and cut waste and spillage. The advantage to the manufacturers is less clear-cut as consumers usually, at present, use too high a dose.

Neither Lever Brothers, the home laundry division of Unilever, nor Procter & Gamble, would reveal the exact dates of the tablets' launch. Helen Fenwick of Lever Brothers said: "We will be launching nationally and we will be

the first to do that." She added the tablets were in response to customers' desire for "simplicity and convenience".

Procter & Gamble are more cautiously launching their version, Ariel Discs, in Grimsby and Cleethorpes in a test-marketing operation. "We're making sure that it is something that consumers want," said Dominic Hayes, public relations manager.

The renewal of the soap wars comes almost four years after Unilever launched the disastrous "Persil Power"

detergent which had a manganese accelerator to give greater cleaning power. Unfortunately the accelerator was defective and tests showed it could rot clothes in the wash. Unilever eventually had to withdraw the product.

If the tablets work, they will herald a "revolution", say industry watchers. But the tablets must perform as promised if the detergent makers are not to find themselves in the midst of another fiasco.

David Benady of Marketing Week said: "[Manufacturers] had the tech-

nology for several years but they've held back because it would take away extra sales. I think now Levers doesn't have that much choice because they have seen their market share decline." He added that there were technical difficulties, that the tablets must "dissolve in water but not dissolve in the packet and there's some difficulty in that".

But Mr Hayes said that Procter & Gamble had cracked that problem with a soft inside and a hard outside which only dissolves in water. "It's phenomenal," he said.

Civil servants block pardons for First World War deserters

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

MINISTRY OF Defence officials are locked in battle with ministers over demands for pardons to be issued to more than 300 soldiers who were shot for desertion and cowardice in the First World War.

The Daily Mail newspaper reported yesterday that proportion campaigners were "likely to have their hopes dashed".

But Andrew Mackinlay, the Labour MP for Thurrock who has been leading the pardon campaign, yesterday backed ministry denials that any decision had been reached by John Reid, the defence minister who has been reviewing the cases.

"I know that the minister will

be meeting with lawyers and academics supporting the pardon campaign in the next few weeks," Mr Mackinlay said. "These meetings are being arranged at the request of the minister."

The Ministry of Defence said it was possible that ministers would announce their decision this summer. "But no timescale has been set," said a spokesman, who added that it was a complex matter.

Soon after last May's election, The Independent reported that the 307 British soldiers executed during the First World War for cowardice, desertion and other battlefield offences "could be pardoned by the end of the year".

It is a reflection of official tenacity and resistance that

ministers have been unable to come to any conclusion since.

At every step of the way, officials have managed to come up with a stream of legal, administrative and other reasons for a rejection of the pardon campaign backed by ministers, MPs and the Royal British Legion.

Officials have argued that if a blanket pardon was given, some soldiers who were certainly guilty of cowardice would be included, and a review of First World War courts martial would open the "floodgates" to demands for more retrospective pardons - and possible claims for compensation.

The men from the ministry are trying to persuade Mr Reid that it would be more appropriate to issue a general expression of regret for the

apparent injustice the men suffered - rather than the more formal process of pardon.

Mr Reid and more than one-third of the current Labour Cabinet voted for a pardon in the Commons in 1996, when the Conservative government successfully beat off a legislative amendment from Mr Mackinlay.

Last year, Mr Mackinlay tabled a Commons motion, arguing "that the vast majority of the 307 executed were as patriotic and brave as their million other compatriots who perished in the conflict".

It is argued that many of the executed soldiers - some of whom were just 19 when they were shot - were suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Peace protesters cite 'laws of God' in court

By Andrew Buncombe

TWO PEACE campaigners in their seventies cited the Coronation Oath of Elizabeth I when they appeared in court yesterday charged with cutting the fence of an atomic bomb factory.

Sarah Hipperson, 70, and Elizabeth Walford, 77, said that the production of nuclear weapons broke "the laws of God" - something everyone is duty bound to uphold.

In what may be a landmark case, Reading Crown Court was told that the two women had been among protesters who cut the fence at Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Berkshire. They carried out their protest on 5 August 1996, the 51st anniversary of the first military use of an atomic bomb at Hiroshima.

Barnaby Evans, prosecuting, said that the pair, with two others, had cut the fence 74 times, causing £10,200 worth of dam-

age. The court was told that the women made no attempt to run away when they were arrested by Ministry of Defence officers.

Ms Hipperson told officers: "I would like to say that I cut the fence because of Crown land, belonging to Her Majesty the Queen. Under the 1558 Coronation Oath (of Elizabeth I) all citizens of the country, including officers of the Ministry of Defence and AWE, have to obey the laws of God. I believe what is happening in AWE Burghfield is contrary to the law of God and that is why I cut the fence."

Mr Evans said: "These defendants are anti-nuclear campaigners... You may agree with their views or you may disagree but it would be hard for anyone to doubt their sincerity."

Both women, who gave their address as Yellow Gate at the women's peace camp, Greenham Common, Berkshire, deny damaging property.

The case continues.

Two held over island murders

By Louise Jury

TWO ALBANIAN farm workers were named yesterday as the men facing formal murder charges after they allegedly confessed to killing a British couple on a Greek island.

Roy Eccles, 55, and his wife Judith, 49, were stabbed to death in Kammarata on the island of Cephalonia in the early hours of Thursday at their villa.

Lahros Pappas, 22, who lived in the same village as the couple, and Edward Elmazi, 19, were arrested at gunpoint on the neighbouring island of Lefkas after a brief chase.

The arrests came after a tip-off from a member of the Albanian immigrant community on Cephalonia.

A police spokesman said the pair had confessed to ransacking the couple's villa and killing them. They left cameras,

gold jewellery and other valuables behind them when they fled.

Detectives took samples from blood stains found on the men's clothing.

It had emerged the two farm workers were missing from Cephalonia after police questioned and fingerprinted more than 100 Albanians in the wake of the killings.

Impoverished Albanians flooding into Greece have been accused of a number of crimes recently.

Mr and Mrs Eccles retired to Cephalonia from their home in St Neot's, Cambridgeshire, last October. Their bodies were discovered by a neighbour, Richard Coward, 52, and Mrs Eccles' brother, Derek Wooding.

Mr Coward said: "We still do not understand why they were murdered. I am angry. There is no rhyme or reason to it - no logic."

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سكرا من الامل

Prescott wins £300m bonus to bring Tube up to scratch before sale

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

THE LONDON Underground is to receive more than £300m in additional cash to upgrade the ailing network in the run-up to the sale of the capital's track and stations.

According to a pre-arranged pact, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will make it clear in his Budget speech today that the money was won by John Prescott, the Deputy

Prime Minister. Mr Prescott will take the political stage on Thursday to outline his plans partially to privatise the Tube. He is expected to say that the network will be broken up into two or three infrastructure companies and then leased to the private sector for 20 years.

In the most plausible scenario, "subsurface" lines - the Circle, District, Metropolitan, Hammersmith and City - will form one franchise and the deep lines - the Victoria, Pic-

cadilly, Jubilee, Central, Northern and Bakerloo - will form another, or be split into two.

Railtrack, which owns the nation's track and stations, will be allowed to bid for the whole system, raising the spectre of a private monopoly in place of a public one. Mr Prescott, however, is keen not to let that happen.

Today's budget will make good some of the cuts imposed by the previous administration. In the last Con-

servative budget, London Transport's spending was cut from £920m in 1996/97 to £150m in the year beginning 1999. LT has also had to absorb about £500m extra costs from the delayed Jubilee Line Extension (JLE).

In order to alleviate some of the short-term cash shortages, Mr Prescott has written the funding from the Treasury. There will be £100m for next year and £200m for 1999. Tight Treasury constraints have been boot - which will see money saved this year

added to the next 12 months' budget - yielding at least another £70m for the Tube. The Chancellor may also write off some of the JLE's extra costs.

The money is desperately needed for the crumbling network. Mr Prescott has accepted that any reorganisation will need to raise £7bn to bring the system up to scratch.

The Deputy Prime Minister needs to tread carefully. He has had to placate the left by annoying Labour's modernising faction - by

bandying phrases such as "publicly owned and publicly accountable" - while requiring new Labour's high priests to endorse his plans.

The result is a compromise. So train operations will be kept in the public sector - until they fail the public's aspirations. Then they can be sold off. Mr Prescott will also need to deal with criticism (already made by some trade unionists) that the private-public deal will fragment the Tube.

And Whitehall advisers are already

hatching ways to diffuse one political time-bomb: City fees. Mr Prescott has been warned that a Tube sell-off could cost £100m in advisors' costs.

Travellers face disruption on London Underground next week because of a one-day strike by guards. Members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union who work on the Northern Line will walk out on 26 March over the abolition of guards' jobs as the service switches to one-person operation later this year.

Brown and Blair plan a budget roadshow

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

GORDON BROWN likes to imagine himself as Lloyd George to Tony Blair's Herbert Asquith. But this week he will play Judy Finnigan to the Prime Minister's Richard Madeley when the two take to the road to promote their budget.

Clearly still stung by reports of splits, the two will underline how united they are by hosting a question-and-answer session in London on Thursday. In front of an invited audience, the composition of which Downing Street was vague about yesterday, they will expand on their vision of today's budget. Although the venue for the session has not been revealed, it will take place at lunchtime.

Yesterday a spokesman for Mr Blair said he had worked out final details of the budget speech with Mr Brown at Chequers on Saturday. The Chancellor was expected to be on his feet for an hour, about the time he spoke in his first budget, in July. This week's budget would be part of a grand vision, the Prime Minister's spokesman said. It would form one of the most significant events of this five-year Parliament.

"He believes Gordon is doing a brilliant job and that he will be seen as one of the great radical reforming chancellors... This speech will set a clear course for the next phase of the modernisation of Britain," he said. But the budget would be grand in spirit rather than in reality, he added. "When I talked about the budget being big, I was not being sizeist. It was a

qualitative rather than a quantitative description."

At the heart of the package will be the theme of making work pay, designed to show there was a real difference between Labour and the Tories. However, some commentators were predicting the plan to bring an end to boom-and-bust economics would lead to more public-spending controls.

Long after the parameters of the budget had been set and several days after the fine details of the speech were discussed, the Chancellor was facing heavy lobbying about its contents. He was being asked to provide extra money for everything from wildlife to church roofs.

The Liberal Democrats weighed in with a demand for extra funding for public services. This should include schooling for all three and four year-olds, smaller class sizes, more books and equipment and a programme to eliminate the education repairs backlog. The Chancellor should also cut hospital waiting lists, abolish eye and dental check charges and provide at least 4 per cent annual growth for the health service. All this could be funded by a penny 00 tax and 5p on a packet of cigarettes, the party's Treasury spokesman, Malcolm Bruce, said.

Anti-smoking groups had more ambitious plans, demanding an extra 24p on a packet of cigarettes, while the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds wanted pesticide taxes and the Church of England wanted VAT removed from church repairs.



Cooking up a statement: The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, in the form of a cake, getting a taste of his own medicine

Global phone taps feared in new EU deal

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

PLANS to set up a global telephone tapping operation are alleged to be behind a European anti-crime agreement being rushed through by European Ministers.

Two civil liberties campaign groups, Justice and Statewatch, have complained to the Lords Select Committee on the European Communities that a new Convention of Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters is part of a larger, FBI-inspired project to create worldwide surveillance of telecommunications.

The first draft of the convention, in 1996, did not mention the interception of telecommunications, and when an attempt was made to inject the issue into the convention last year, no agreement could be reached.

But British ministers tabled a compromise proposal in January, "in the hope of reaching early agreement."

Under the plan, any country wanting to tap into satellite telephone calls would have to get normal domestic clearance, but the intercepting country - where the satellite ground station was based - would simply have to "click a switch" to give an instant relay of any conversation.

It was argued that if the tapping country had to get domestic clearance as well, the whole process would be considerably slowed down and it would "impose a possibly unwelcome administrative burden on that state."

The Lords committee gave the draft convention broad endorsement, but it has reported that, "According to Statewatch, there was an EU-FBI plan to create a global system for the surveillance of telecommunications."

That plan, Statewatch said,

was being implemented through a council of ministers resolution, adopted in January 1995 - but not published until November 1996 - and a memorandum of understanding between the EU and other countries, which was only deposited in Lords and Commons libraries in February 1997, in response to a parliamentary question.

The UK proposals were sent to the select committee on 12 January, with consideration by Brussels officials due on 26 January; the Lords Committee agreed its report on 17 February, and it was published last week, on 12 March.

Justice did not receive a copy until last Friday, and the Home Office was unable to say when Ministers would be deciding the issue.

According to the Lords report, "Justice said that a group of 20 states, co-ordinated by the FBI, had been working towards a harmonisation of national laws to remove any obstacles to the interception of all forms of telecommunications by law enforcement agencies."

"In Justice's view, there was a serious risk that the Convention, combined with the [other] international agreements, would open the way to extensive and increasing surveillance of individuals both inside and outside the jurisdiction of the [EU] member states."

Madeline Colvin, of Justice, told *The Independent* yesterday that she was dissatisfied with the checks that were being carried out on the new proposals - before they were pushed through.

"The difficulty is that it is all very technical and very few organisations are ever allowed to know what is going on," she said. "We get our information, not directly from any Government department on this, but only from the House of Lords. There is really no proper consultation."

US ambassador to Ireland retires

By Alan Murdoch
Ireland Correspondent

THE American Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Keonedy-Smith, who played a critical role in early stages of the Northern Ireland peace process, is to retire in the summer.

The youngest of six sisters of the late US President John F. Kennedy, used her family influence in early 1994, when successfully lobbying the White House to allow Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams a visa to visit the US. The move, encouraged by the then-Taoiseach Albert Ray-

nolds, caused uproar among Unionist and Conservative circles in Britain, but was elsewhere credited with advancing the August 1994 IRA ceasefire.

There was also controversy over her relations with embassy staff who disassociated with her pro-active role on Northern Ireland diplomacy. Similar disagreements arose with US Ambassador to London, Raymond Seitz, now retired, who recently claimed she had been too close to Sinn Féin. The claims were forcefully rejected by the Irish Government. The Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said

yesterday "she has been with the peace process all of the way from the very beginning. If (the Adams visa support) had not happened, it is no exaggeration to say that other events might not have fallen into place. She used good judgement. She was not by any means one-sided."

Mrs Kennedy-Smith, 70, was appointed in 1993 by President Clinton. She helped arrange his 1995 visit to both parts of Ireland which attracted huge crowds. That experience is believed to have strengthened his interest in helping achieve a political settlement.



Peace broker: Jean Keonedy-Smith

Defectors head for Lib-Dem sanctuary

By Anthony Bevins

THE Liberal Democrats have notched up 24 local Labour defections since the election, the party revealed yesterday.

The latest switch took place in Liverpool last week, when Chris Newby, a Labour councillor in the city's Broadgreen ward, joined the Liberal Democrat group on the council.

Nick Harvey, the MP who chairs the party's Campaigns and Communications Committee, told *The Independent* yesterday: "We are delighted that a substantial number of

Labour councillors have decided to join us."

The Government decision to cut child benefit for lone parents was cited as a significant "catalyst" for the change.

But Mr Harvey said: "Our new members cite several reasons for joining us. Many contrast our commitment to increase spending on public services, through carefully targeted taxes, with the Government's broken pledges on class sizes and health waiting lists."

"Many, too, identify with our policies on constitutional reform and Europe."

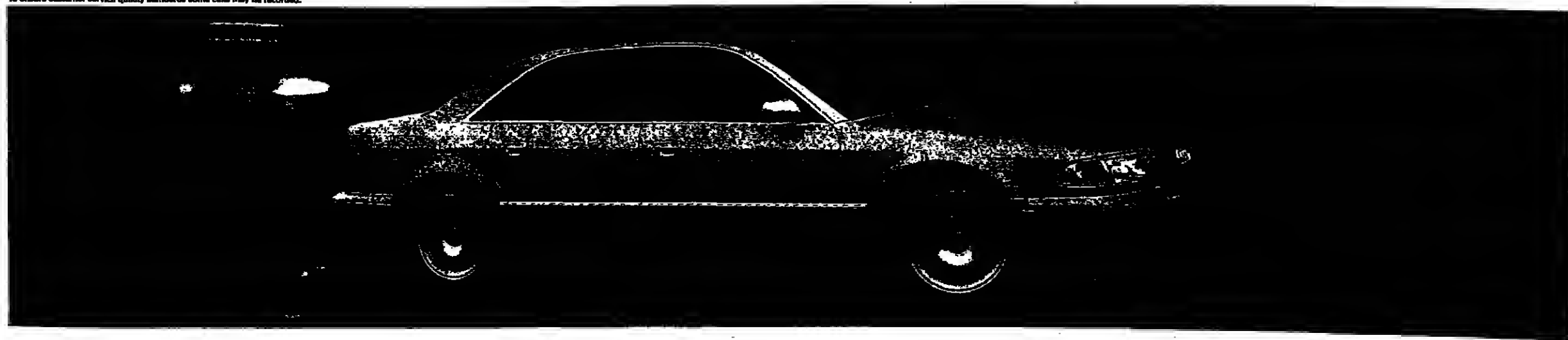
A party spokesman said last night that it was not a question of the Liberal Democrats moving to the left; they had remained where they had always been, while Labour had moved to the right. The 24 defections since the election compare with eight local Labour councillors and "celebrities" who defected in the 12 months up to last May.

Since the start of the year, the Liberal Democrats have been joined by councillor Carl Kisicki of Lewisham; Keith Iton, the ex-chairman of Hull West and Hessle Council; councillor Daniel McCarthy, of

Southwark and councillor Meher Khan, former Mayor of Waltham Forest.

But Mr Harvey was also keen to point out that not all the defections were from Labour - citing "the decisions of former Tory MPs and MEPs like Hugh Dykes, Anna McCurley and Peter Price to become Liberal Democrats." Other Tory defectors include Keith Raffan, former MP for Delyn; Lord Thomas of Swynerton; Arthur and Susan Bell, of the Scottish Tory Reform Group; and Lady Mary O'Hagan, former head of the Tory MEPs' London office.

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Soldier 'covered his tracks' after killing girl, nine

A soldier pretended to be an anxious parent after killing his nine-year-old stepdaughter and burying her in an animal burrow, a court was told yesterday.

Nigel Pascoe, QC, opening the case for the prosecution at Bristol Crown Court, said Private Miles Evans was trying to cover his tracks for the "savage and cruel" murder of Zoe in January last year.

He claimed that Pte Evans, 24, had taken the girl in the night from his married quarters home at Warminster, Wiltshire, to kill her and bury her head first in an animal hole on Battlesbury Hill, less than a mile from the family home.

Mr Pascoe told the jury that Mr Evans' wife Paula, raised the alarm the following morning. Mr Pascoe claimed: "Miles Evans continued to pretend that he was an anxious parent but we say he was nothing of the sort. At all times we say he was the killer seeking only to cover his tracks and to divert suspicion from himself."

The "callous killer" left behind two crucial pieces of evidence, said the prosecution lawyer. The first was his own T-shirt, stained with Zoe's blood and his semen, from sexual intercourse earlier with his wife. The second was a pair of the child's pants, probably dropped after Zoe had been killed and when he was en route to burying her. Her body was not found for six weeks.

Pte Evans has pleaded not guilty to the charge that he murdered his stepdaughter at Warminster between 9 January and 12 January last year.

Mr Pascoe maintained that when the jury considered all the



Zoe's jury told stepfather left two crucial bits of evidence

evidence, such as the T-shirt and particularly the time frame of the crime, it could only find one candidate as the killer - Miles Evans.

Any other possibility, the Crown claimed, would be fanciful. But Mr Pascoe stressed that Pte Evans had pleaded not guilty and had throughout denied his involvement.

Mr Pascoe added: "I want to stress in as clear a manner as I possibly can that the child's mother, Paula, played no part whatsoever in the death of Zoe."

The court heard how Zoe was put to bed on the night of her death at 10.20pm. The police were telephoned the next day soon after midday and the biggest search ever conducted in this country for a missing child began.

The search involved neighbours, friends, police, Army personnel and helicopters.

Mr Pascoe went on to describe how Zoe's body was

found on 26 February on Battlesbury Hill, hidden in a hole used by animals. He told how at some stage animals had pulled the body out of the hole and the lower part of the child's remains were damaged.

Mr Pascoe said that Zoe had suffered an injury to her nose, and had inhaled blood and died of asphyxiation. He said her small crop-top had been stuffed into her mouth.

Mr Pascoe said suggestions that Zoe had left the house on her own, had sleepwalked to her death or that an intruder had broken in were inconceivable.

Mr Pascoe added that the way Miles Evans behaved in the hours after her death and the lies that he told were the actions of a man trying to conceal what had happened.

"His behaviour on the night after her death was quite extraordinary. While Paula searched in desperation, Miles Evans went to bed. He said he wanted to keep his strength up for the morning of the search."

Mr Pascoe told the court that a set of clothes belonging to Pte Evans was still missing. This, he said, was "very significant" as Zoe's murderer would have been covered in blood.

Mr Pascoe told the court that Miles and Zoe had a good relationship and that Miles clearly enjoyed physical contact with Zoe. He said most nights there was play fighting between the two.

"It will be for you to consider whether Miles Evans's physical horseplay hid a darker attraction for his stepdaughter," he told the court.

The trial continues today.



Poster art: The author Stephen Calloway dresses as Aubrey Beardsley yesterday to launch his book about the illustrator, published by V&A Publications. The Victoria and Albert museum is to run an exhibition of Beardsley's work in October
Photograph: David Rose

Bird foul-up blacks out lightships

By Roger Dobson

BIRDS which have been casting a shadow over solar-powered lightships are about to get an earful.

Thousands of birds have been leaving their debris on the ships and the solar panels, threatening the only power source for lightships and turning the highly visible bright red of the boats into a cloudy shade of white.

Now, in a bid to repel the unwanted guest, bird-scaring equipment is being installed on two unmanned vessels which will mimic the distress calls of half a dozen birds known to be regular vis-

itors. Scientists hope the dawn-to-dusk choruses will deter the birds from fouling the solar panels and the ships, delegates to an international conference on pest management at the University of Wales, Cardiff, were told.

Birds have always been something of a problem for Trinity House, the organisation responsible for lighthouses and buoys around the coast of Britain, but the trouble has been exacerbated by the arrival of unmanned and fully automatic lightships, two of which are now on station in the Wash and at South Goodwin off Dover.

Barry Rodwell, deputy principal de-

velopment engineer with Trinity House Lighthouse Service, said: "We have hit a problem with birds fouling and it can be quite horrendous. We normally paint the ships red and they can get white all over in a very short time with the numbers of birds involved. These ships are painted red to act as a marker to shipping during the daytime and changing colour to white is not very helpful."

"And of course, if the solar panels get covered up, they would stop producing the necessary power for the various aids to navigation on board the vessels."

He added: "It was not a problem

when they were diesel powered because they were visited for refuelling and maintenance, and once the ship was alongside it would hose the vessel down."

A bird-scaring system designed by Sussex-based Scarecrow Bio-Acoustic Systems will be used to keep the birds away. The company has digitised the distress sounds of a number of birds including the herring gull, black-headed gull, common gull and lapwing, and installed them in a loudspeaker unit that will be set up on the ships.

A system has already proved its worth at the British Embassy in Rome after it was invaded by starlings.



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White House wheels out big guns to defend beleaguered President

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

THE WHITE HOUSE mounted an all-out damage limitation exercise yesterday in response to televised claims by a White House voluntary worker, Kathleen Willey, that President Bill Clinton had kissed and groped her when she went to ask him for a job four years ago.

Mr Clinton, clearly stung and concerned by the allegations, took time out from a Washington school visit to repeat his sworn testimony that "nothing improper happened" between himself and Ms Willey. He told reporters that he had not seen the television interview - he was at the presidential re-

treating at Camp David through the weekend - but that he was "mystified and disappointed" by the allegations. He said he had a "very clear memory" of his 1993 meeting with Ms Willey, "and I told the truth".

Attacking on three fronts, White House officials repeated Mr Clinton's denial; they fielded the President's lawyer and communications director to call into question Ms Willey's good faith, and they laboured behind the scenes to remind White House press corps members of Mr Clinton's version and their duty to objective reporting.

Minutes after Ms Willey's interview on Sunday evening, the White House had issued a brief statement, denying her allega-

tions on Mr Clinton's behalf. "Ms Willey's allegation is simply not true," the statement said.

In the interview, broadcast in the CBS weekly news programme, *60 Minutes*, Ms Willey had described hesitantly, but vividly, how Mr Clinton had clinched her in a hug that lasted "longer than I expected", kissed her on the lips, touched her breasts and put his hand on her genitals. The encounter took place on 29 November 1993, when Ms Willey, overwhelmed by financial difficulties, went to ask Mr Clinton for a paid job.

Mr Clinton does not deny that the meeting took place, but said in his sworn testimony that, while he might have embraced Ms Willey and kissed her

briefly on the forehead, there was "nothing sexual about it".

One of the White House's chief weapons is Mr Clinton's lawyer in the case, Robert Bennett, who said that Mr Clinton was more angry than Mr Bennett had ever seen him.

Also fronting the President's defence was the White House director of communications, Ann Lewis. Interviewed on the breakfast shows yesterday, she asked why, if the 1993 meeting had gone so wrong for Ms Willey, she had subsequently exchanged friendly letters with Mr Clinton and insistently volunteered to help with his 1996 re-election campaign. Ms Lewis said that Ms Willey had gone to see her personally to volunteer. She said:

"Watching last night, I thought, gee, if I hadn't had my personal experience [with Ms Willey], how would I feel about it?"

While mainstream US media went out of their way to present both sides of the story and not to suggest that Ms Willey's interview had the potential to topple the President, a prediction several analysts made when the revelations about the former White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, broke two months ago, others were less circumspect.

Orrin Hatch, the Republican chairman of the Senate judiciary committee said: "If these allegations are true, that is the end of this presidency."

Ms Willey's charges also appeared to have lost Mr Clinton

the support of the mainstream feminists represented by the National Organisation of Women. Patricia Ireland, president of NOW, said of Ms Willey's account: "This is beyond the idea of the likeable rogue... and really on into... sexual abuse."

Meanwhile, the threat to Mr Clinton of a second White House trainee scandal seemed to have receded. The appearance of a 24-year-old New York singer, Sherrie Densuk, who had been expected to testify in the Lewinsky investigation this week, has been postponed. Ms Densuk was quoted as saying that she did not know Monica Lewinsky, and the White House said there was no record that she had ever been a trainee there.

US army reassures women

THE UNITED STATES Defense Secretary, William Cohen, sought to reassure women recruits in the armed forces yesterday in the wake of recent sexual harassment scandals in the military, writes Mary Dejevsky.

Mr Cohen announced that the number of female recruits and training officers was to be increased and selection procedures improved.

While his remarks were presented as a response to the recommendations of a congressional report, the timing indicated that they were also addressed to disconsolate servicewomen following the court martial verdict on Sergeant-Major Gene McKinney, the army's former top enlisted man, last week.

McKinney was acquitted last Friday on 18 counts of sexual harassment and found guilty on one charge of obstructing the course of justice, where there was recorded telephone evidence against him. Six women had testified against him, alleging improper advances and threats, but there was no third-party evidence for any of the accusations. The verdict has drawn fierce criticism from women's groups.

McKinney was due to be sentenced yesterday. He faces up to five years in prison, a dishonourable discharge and loss of pension.



Rock of ages: Olivia Newton-John (left), Stockard Channing and Didi Conn (right) celebrating the re-release of the film *Grease* on its 20th anniversary. The trio starred with John Travolta, who was unable to attend the Hollywood screening. Photograph: Reuters

Colombian rebels target American advisers

COLOMBIA (Reuters) - A rebel commander who recently handed the Colombian army its worst defeat in more than 30 years has warned that he would begin targeting US military advisers, accusing them of heading covert counter-insurgency operations.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) chief Fabian Ramirez

said his fighters were in "combative mood" after their recent victory and were ready to strike at thousands of army reinforcements being airlifted into Caqueta province.

Two weeks ago, 300 FARC guerrillas attacked the army's crack Third Mobile Brigade - a cornerstone of the military's anti-guerrilla strategy - killing

83 soldiers and capturing 43 others. "The claim that the United States is combating drugs in Colombia is a sophism. All the military and economic aid it is giving to the army is to fight the guerrillas," Ramirez said.

"Most (Colombian army) battalions have US advisers so it is clear that Colombian rage will explode at any mo-

ment and the objective will be to defeat the Americans." Last year, the line between the anti-drug and anti-guerrilla wars became blurred when White House drug czar Gen Barry McCaffrey authorized the use of US aid to combat what he dubbed "15,000 narco-guerrillas."

FARC has always denied any links with drug cartels.

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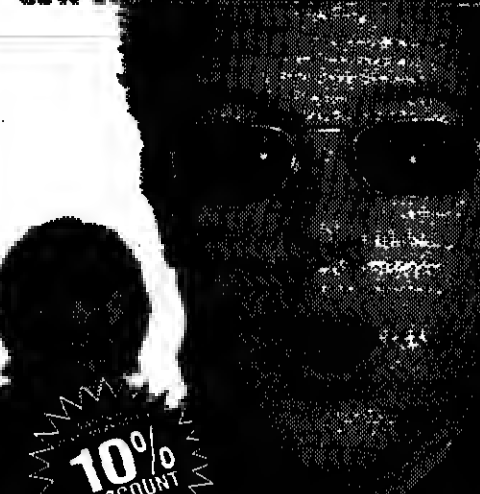
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Head start: A South Korean army cadet adjusting his cap before being commissioned at a graduation ceremony in Seoul yesterday. President Kim Dae-jung stressed the need for the army's political neutrality. Photograph: Reuters

Mexican crime chills sunshine pensioners

By Phil Davison
in Cuernavaca

MARK NIXON was not quite your typical American pensioner in Mexico. He enjoyed the climate in Cuernavaca, the "City of Eternal Spring", and the south-of-the-border value for his dollars. But he had been more successful than most of his fellow American pensioners or "snowbirds" who spend the winter of their years, or at least the American winters, in this city just south of Mexico City.

Mr Nixon, 60, had a reputation as "architect to the stars" in Beverly Hills, California, before moving south a decade ago. In Cuernavaca he turned a ruined hacienda into the renowned El Rancho Cuernavaca, a hotel that became backdrop to several Hollywood movies and photo shoots. The setting was often billed in magazines as "Under the

Volcano", a reference to the novel written by Malcolm Lowry in and around this town.

Last week, Mr Nixon was found dead in his home, with ten stab wounds to his body. The same day, another American, Joseph Anisz Poston, 50, a retired dancer, was found dead in his home in the posh Lomas area of Mexico City. Mr Poston's testicles had been cut off.

The killings sent shivers through the tens of thousands of Americans who live in Mexico, either on short- or long-term business assignments, as full-time retirees, or as winter "snowbirds". Americans had hoped that the last killing of a compatriot, the businessman Peter Zarate, just before Christmas in Mexico City, had been a fluke, a simple robbery. He was shot dead after taking a taxi whose driver was in cahoots with a gang.

Whatever the motives for the respective murders - the subject of feverish speculation - all three were American, all are dead and their compatriots, from students to pensioners, are jittery. The US embassy has upgraded its warnings to Americans not to take taxi cabs in the streets of Mexico City and to take extra security measures at home.

The general consensus here is that the latest Americans killed were not picked out because of their nationality, but were merely three more victims of a crime wave that is plaguing this country, particularly the capital. There are an average of three murders a day in Mexico City and 82 reported rapes.

In the central belt around Mexico City, there were 700 highway robberies last year, often on tourist buses. One of the worst routes is the most potentially touristic - the relatively new motorway between Mexico City and

the Pacific resort of Acapulco. It was on that highway that Mexico's latest scandal recently began. Police from the state of Morelos were allegedly dumping body of someone who had been tortured beside the highway when police from the neighbouring state of Guerrero spotted them. According to witnesses, the latter were upset not by the fact that fellow police were dumping a body but that they were dumping it on someone else's patch. "Our state is not a rubbish dump," one Guerrero officer reportedly said.

Asked to explain the victim's apparent torture marks, the Morelos police reportedly said "we were trying to question him and he got over-excited. He was bumping into everything." The Morelos chief of police and prosecutor have both been charged with "torture and cover-up" and face long jail terms.

As crisis deepens, one man's pain is another man's pleasure

When describing the practice of revelling in the misfortunes of others, English speakers have to rely on a German word - *schadenfreude*. The Chinese have no such problem. Here in Hong Kong we've been hearing a lot of people saying "hang di joy lok wor", literally meaning "happy about other people's disasters".

There is a great deal to be happy about these days in financially-challenged Hong Kong. Admittedly we have caught no more than the tail end of the financial crisis sweeping across Asia but it has been sufficiently potent to give us something to chuckle about.

All the people you love to hate are facing problems. I list them in no particular order but they include Hong Kong's voracious landlords, stockbrokers and other money pushers, estate agents, banks, the managers of posh hotels and the purveyors of designer clothing.

Just months ago this unsavoury assortment of the rich and mean were going about their business without a care in the world. Now things are very different.

Property prices are diving through the floor, which prompted a friend of mine to ask for a rent reduction last October. The crisis was just taking hold then and his landlord replied that as he was the first to ask for a reduction, he would never be given one. The block of flats where this occurred is now half empty.

Out of sheer malice I have spent small amounts of time peering into the windows of totally deserted estate agents. I like to see the previously surly persons employed in these premises leap out of their seats and dash outside to see if they can help me.

Malice also takes me to make enquiries about room rates at Hong Kong's notoriously overpriced hotels where the word "discount" was about as rare as a modest stockbroker. Ask for a discount these days and you will hear nothing resembling the "D" word but are almost certain to be regaled with talk of packages. It amounts to the same thing but doesn't sound half as crude.

As for stockbrokers, and so-called analysts, who could be spared spending the equivalent of some smaller nation's gross domestic product on an evening's entertainment, they are now more subdued, some are even out of work.

Only a hypocrite would pretend that it gives them no pleasure to observe these sorry souls clutching a half drunk bottle of some tepid Mexican beer for an entire evening.

HONG KONG DIARY

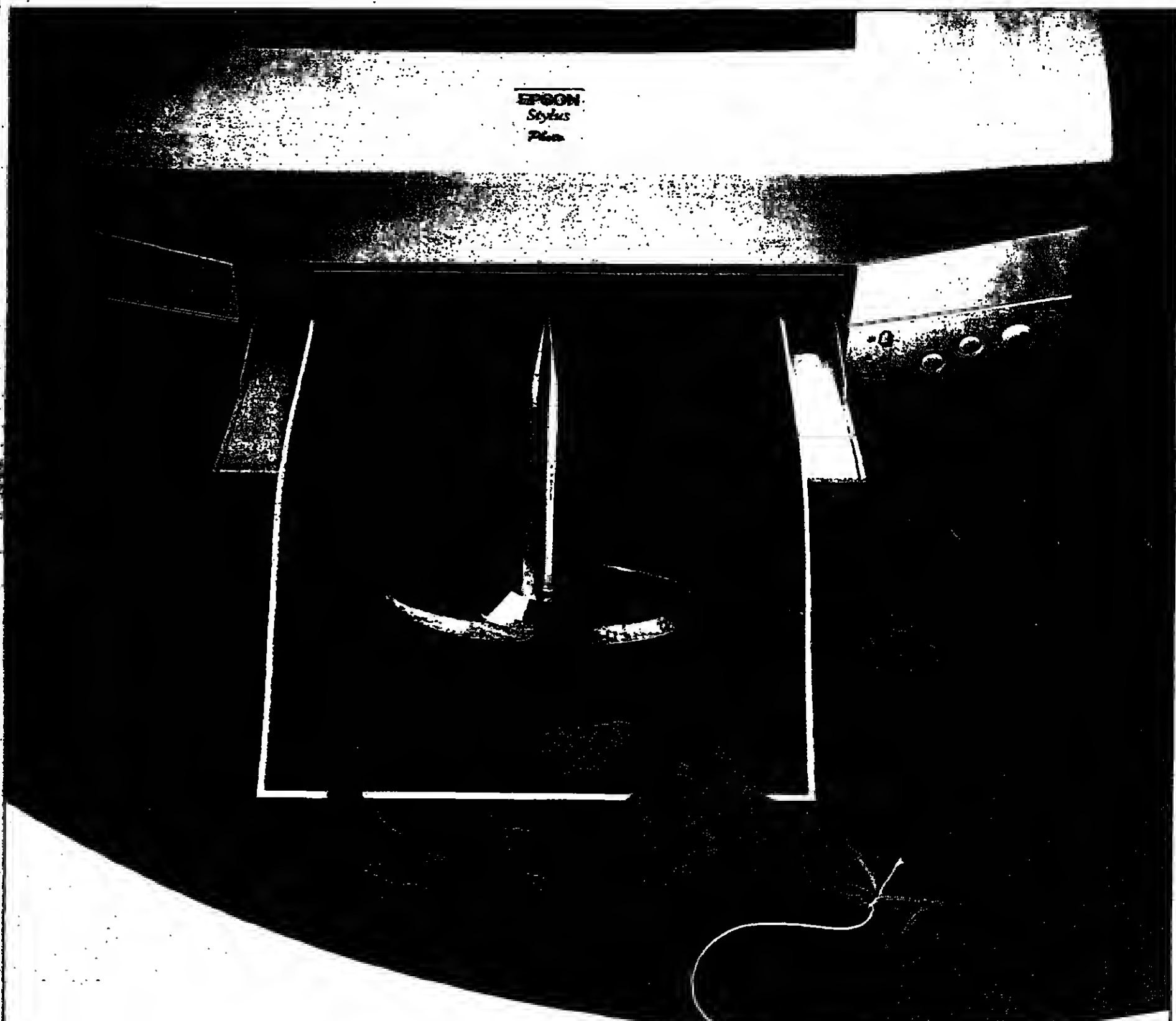


Stephen Vines

Before reluctantly departing from the basking of financial analysts I am keeping a careful count of the number of such people who are claiming to have been the "only one" to have predicted the current financial crisis. The tally of such "exclusives" is now in double figures. Rigorously excluded from this total is one of Hong Kong's most flamboyant fund managers, known as Dr Doom. His real name is Marc Faber and he has been predicting the collapse of Asian markets through two major booms when anyone following his advice would have forgone making a small fortune.

Hong Kong is a hot contender for the title of having the world's worst climate. Most of the year it is extremely humid, and, more recently, heavily polluted. The worst of the humidity starts round about now. Unless precautions are taken clothes left in cupboards take on a lurid green appearance as they become covered in mould. However, determined to look on the brighter side, I can report that this is all good news for us cigar smokers. Only a fool would need to invest in a humidifier in these circumstances.

The Hong Kong government and its more extreme supporters who are currently stuffing themselves with Peking duck while attending the monotonous sessions of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress in Peking, hate nothing more than the enormously popular radio talk-in shows, which score top ratings here. The trouble with these shows is that Mr and Mrs Joe Public demonstrate a less than reverential attitude towards Peking. Last week I was chatting with Albert Cheng, the king of the talk shows, who revealed the secret of his survival. According to the scrupulously immodest Mr Cheng, Jung Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive, needs him around so that when he is criticised for his autocratic ways he can smile and present his democratic credentials by saying "how can you say there's no freedom in Hong Kong with Albert Cheng around".



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Cook bows to Israelis on Har Homa visit

By Eric Silver
in Jerusalem

ROBIN COOK blinked first last night and submitted to Israeli conditions for visiting the contentious Har Homa site in Arab East Jerusalem, where Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government plans to build 6,000 Jewish homes.

After a protracted diplomatic poker game, the Foreign Secretary agreed to visit the wooded hillside between Jerusalem and Bethlehem accompanied by an Israeli official, who will put Israel's case for the project and for sovereign control of the disputed holy city.

Mr Cook had planned earlier to go to Har Homa with Faisal Husseini, a high ranking Palestinian official in Jerusalem. He will now meet Mr Husseini and other Palestinian figures in an Arab university building in East Jerusalem.

The Har Homa tour, which is part of a 24-hour visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, had threatened to undermine British and European hopes of playing a wider role in the Middle East peace process.

A senior Israeli diplomat had warned Mr Cook that his visit to the settlement would precipitate a major crisis, even without Mr Husseini. "Without Israel," the official said, "they [the Europeans] cannot play a role. It takes two to tango."

Britain is currently the European Union's rotating president and Mr Cook is visiting Israel in the name of all 15 member states.

The nearest to an Israeli concession last night was that the Foreign Secretary will



Ministry official complained yesterday.

"We don't inspect our friends. The Europeans may or may not recognise Israeli sovereignty, but as long as the issue is not resolved they should not come with prejudicial views." Mr Netanyahu's media adviser, David Bar-Ilan, suggested it would be like an Israeli minister visiting Northern Ireland as a guest of Sinn Féin.

Israeli officials also complained that Mr Cook had decided to drop a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial - a staple for visiting dignitaries - from his itinerary.

Israel says it would welcome a European contribution to the Israeli-Palestinian process and to Israel's quest for a way to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon without endangering its northern border. But Israel insists the parties must negotiate their own terms. "We don't expect mediators to teach each side what to do," the senior diplomat said.

Israel fears a European peace formula would become the Palestinian base line. "When people negotiate," the official argued, "both sides have to meet each other half way. If the Europeans come with set ideas of what the outcome should be, the Palestinians cannot ask for less."

In London, a spokesman for Tony Blair said the Prime Minister stood behind Mr Cook's decision to visit the disputed area.

Following talks in Jordan this morning, Mr Cook will fly to meetings with Mr Arafat in Gaza, with Palestinian officials in East Jerusalem, and Mr Netanyahu on the Israeli side of town. He will discuss the Lebanese issue with the Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, before continuing to Damascus and Beirut.



Atal Behari Vajpayee, the new Prime Minister of India, greeting his supporters in New Delhi yesterday. Photograph: AP

Hindu nationalists celebrate poll victory - but for how long?

By Peter Popham
in Delhi

THE HINDU nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yesterday celebrated its victory in India's general election with sweetmeats, garlands, drums and serpentine trumps.

After a week of tense talks and brinkmanship by a crucial ally, the party's parliamentary leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was finally able to show President Narayanan written proof that his party was close enough to having a majority to have a good chance of winning the inevitable vote of confidence.

The new government will be sworn in on Thursday. President Narayanan has asked Mr Vajpayee to prove his parliamentary majority within 10 days.

While the BJP celebrated, its deadly rival, the Congress party, took a giant step into the unknown when it elected Sonia Gandhi to the chairmanship of its parliamentary party. This followed her election to the party's presidency on Saturday, when her elderly predecessor,

Sitaram Kesri, was ejected in a palace coup. Mrs Gandhi is thus confirmed as Congress's absolute leader. Should Mr Vajpayee stumble and fall, she is now the official alternative.

After three prime ministers in less than two years - Mr Vajpayee having been one of them, for less than a fortnight - India is in dire need of stable government. The momentum of economic reform, started six years ago, has almost ground to a halt. Economic growth is expected to slow from 7.5 per cent last year to around 5 per cent.

But although stability was the BJP's campaign promise, it is unlikely to provide it. It will govern with the support of 21 allied partners and independents, all of whom will need to be appeased and humoured for the government to stay afloat.

Jayalalitha, the South Indian populist leader with an uncanny resemblance to Queen Victoria, who gave the BJP palpitations over the weekend when she failed to send her promised letter of support, is a sign of trouble ahead. Observers

will not be surprised if the government falls within months.

Mr Vajpayee and his colleagues have already had to put off implementing central BJP ideas, such as building a giant Hindu temple in Ayodhya on the site of the mosque destroyed by a mob in 1992, and the enactment of a uniform civil code, eliminating the discretionary treatment of religious minorities in areas such as marriage and divorce. The party's controversial "re-evaluation" of India's nuclear policy is likely to be long drawn out.

The BJP's long-term dilemma is that it rose to prominence as the party with a panacea for Hindu grievances. But to attain power, to win over the Muslim vote, for example, it has had to abandon almost everything that made it distinctive. What remains is an obligation to reward big-business supporters, by offering protection against foreign competition, and its support among small businesses by getting bureaucracy off their backs. The government will also talk tough with Pakistan on Kashmir.

South African official held over gun deal

SOUTH AFRICA'S safety and security minister, Sydney Mufamadi, flew to Maputo yesterday seeking answers to a question preoccupying the nation - what was a foreign affairs official, Robert McBride, up to when he was arrested in Mozambique with a pile of AK47 rifles and \$11,000 (£5,600) in his pocket?

Mr McBride, 34, the Foreign Ministry's Asia desk director, is in a Mozambique jail after being arrested in the border village of Ressano Garcia a week ago while trying to escape back across the border.

His involvement in what has all the hallmarks of a gun-running operation is a huge diplomatic embarrassment for South Africa. It has sparked a wave of conspiracy theories which have Mr McBride procuring arms for groups including the IRA and East Timorese rebels.

The arrest of any senior official in these circumstances would cause an outcry. In Mr McBride's case, a reaction is accentuated by his controversial past.

In 1986, Mr McBride, a coloured (mixed race) member of the African National Congress's military wing, planted a bomb on a crowded beachfront in Durban. His target was the Magoo Bar, which he believed was frequented by soldiers and police and was, therefore, a legitimate military target. But

Mozambique arrests ANC man, writes Mary Braid in Johannesburg

when the bomb - 100lb of explosives surrounded by bullets and shrapnel - exploded, it killed three women and scores of civilians. The liberation battle had ventured out of the townships to the doorsteps of South African whites.

Mr McBride was caught and sentenced to death. While waiting to be hanged, he married his lawyer, Paula McBride, who was not only white but the daughter of a director of Anglo American, South Africa's mightiest corporation.

In 1992, Mr McBride was released in the political horse-trading between the National Party and the unbanned ANC. Whites who continued to regard him as a murderer were incensed again when, after the 1994 elections, he took up a job in the department of foreign affairs.

President Nelson Mandela's government is now distancing itself from Mr McBride. Yesterday Mr Mufamadi, accompanied by George Fivaz, the National Police Commissioner, and Billy Maserela, director gen-

eral of the SA Secret Service, made it clear that they were out going to Mozambique to lobby on Mr McBride's behalf.

South African intelligence agencies have dismissed suggestions that Mr McBride was on a secret mission to ferret out former ANC guerrillas thought to be responsible for a recent spate of highway heists.

Mozambican police have said they believe Mr McBride was involved in straightforward gun-running. Mrs McBride yesterday challenged portrayals of her husband as a perpetual revolutionary, secretly fighting for a foreign cause now the war at home was over. She admitted that Gerry Kelly, a leading Sinn Féin member, and his family had stayed at the McBride home in January but said links had been established because of Sinn Féin's interest in South Africa's peaceful transition to democracy. Newspaper reports of IRA gunrunning, she insisted, were "laughable". Mr McBride had simply been on a fact-finding trip in preparation for a conference on gun and drug smuggling.

Mrs McBride said her husband was a man of principle, not a criminal. Those for whom he will forever be the Magoo Bar bomber are hoping that his detention is just the start of a lengthy - and long overdue - sentence.

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Power balance in French regions swings towards National Front

RARELY can an election have produced such a jumble of unfinished sums, conflicting signals and moral dilemmas. The result of Sunday's regional poll in France was, quite simply, a mess. There were outright majorities in just two of the 21 regions in mainland France. In four regions the outcome was utterly opaque, dependant on the whims of fringe candidates.

More menacingly, the far-right National Front was left with the potential balance of power in 19 of the

Local pacts hold the key to control after muddled campaigns left all parties disappointed, reports John Lichfield in Paris

21 regional assemblies. The leaders of the centre-right parties insisted again yesterday that they would make no deals with the National Front to form regional governments when the assemblies meet on Friday. In at least two regions, however, local leaders of the "traditional" right are suspected of taking a more flexible view of Jean-Marie Le Pen's anti-immigrant, anti-European and

anti-American party. If they make local pacts with the Front, it could set a precedent with unpredictable consequences for French politics in the next few years.

In a sense, it was an election which no-one won. Lionel Jospin's Socialist-Communist-Green coalition did less well than expected, but may yet claim 12 or 13 regional governments. The centre-right performed

badly, but did not suffer a wholesale. The National Front scored 15.2 per cent, its highest-ever national total, but only fractionally more than it scored in parliamentary and presidential elections in 1997 and 1995. On a very low turn-out (60 per cent) the Front would have hoped to do better. It fell short of the target of 300 regional seats set by Mr Le Pen and did not top the poll in

any region, though it came close in the Provence-riviera region. NF leaders yesterday invited the "traditional" right to discuss tactical or permanent alliances to keep the left-of-centre parties from forming minority regional governments on Friday covering more than half of France. Leaders of both the Gaullist RPR and the centre-right UDF dismissed all possibility of deal-making.

The former RPR minister, Eric Raoult, warned his own grass-roots: "If they cross the yellow line, the yellow line of the Republic, and of democracy, they will no longer be on our team." In Languedoc-Roussillon, however, the UDF regional president, Jacques Blanc, said there would be no "written" deals with the NF, but he was ready to treat all elected councillors "equally". Sunday's result, following defeat in the parliamentary election last year, confirms the bankruptcy of the respectable right in France - out of ideas, out of energy, lacking convincing new faces.

The Gaullist former Prime minister, Edouard Balladur, said it was time for the disparate parties to merge in one French conservative and liberal party. This is an old idea and a non-starter. Few of the existing party chiefs are ready to work under a single leader, even if one could be found.

Vatican paints a Holocaust whitewash

By Andrew Gumbel
in Rome

AFTER 11 years of deliberation, the Roman Catholic church released its long-awaited pronouncement on the Holocaust yesterday as an "act of repentance" for the failings of the Catholic world to stand up to the massacre of 6 million Jews during the Second World War.

But the 14-page document, entitled *We Remember: A Reflection On The Shoah*, turned out to be a whitewash of the Vatican and the church hierarchies which barely acknowledged the church of Rome's long history of anti-Semitism.

The document, put together by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, vigorously defended Pius XII, the wartime pope much criticised by historians for his refusal to make any public criticism of Nazi Germany. It suggested anti-Semitism was contrary to "the constant teaching of the church", and put the

the institutionalised anti-Semitism of the church of Rome, stretching back to the Council of Nicea in 325, when Jews were deemed "abhorrent to the will of God", or such episodes as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the beatification of dozens of celebrated Jew-haters in the Middle Ages.

And there was no suggestion that any church official might have turned a blind eye to the horrors of Nazism, or even quietly condoned it. The document spoke only of the "many Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity" who helped to save Jewish lives.

It added: "Nevertheless... the spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers. We cannot know how many Christians in countries occupied or ruled by the Nazi powers... were horrified at the disappearance of their Jewish neighbours and yet were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest... We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the church."

Most controversial, perhaps, was the document's attitude to Pius XII, lionised for his covert action "to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives". Many Jews, as well as liberals inside and outside the church, have never forgiven Pius for his failure to speak out in public, arguing that he had a pro-German bias (he was Papal nuncio to Germany during the First World War). He failed to prevent the deportation of Roman Jews, who had lived under the direct protection of the Pope for centuries. His policy was diametrically opposed to that of his predecessor, Pius XI, who wrote an encyclical critical of the Nazis, "Mit brennender Sorge" in 1938, and was preparing an even stronger statement on his deathbed, which was hidden from public view until after Pius XII's death in 1958.

The Vatican has always argued that Pius had no choice - that to oppose the Nazis would have spelled the destruction of the German church. It has never satisfactorily explained, however, why the Church under Pius XII protected Nazis on the run after the war, nor how Pius managed to be such an outspoken critic of the Soviet bloc in the 1950s, when the Nazis inspired no more than generalised comments about Christian values.



Ethnic Albanian women taking bread from Pristina to the Drenica region in a symbolic gesture against the Serb blockade of the area and as a protest against the recent killings in the area of scores of ethnic Albanians, including children, by Serbian forces. Photograph: Reuters

Firefight ends bid to free Britons

By Phil Reeves in Moscow
and Steve Crawshaw in London

THE horror of captivity was set to continue for two British hostages in Chechnya after a team of commandos ran into a lethal firefight on their way to rescue them, according to Russian news reports last night.

The operation, launched in the early hours yesterday by Chechen special services, was called off after the hostages threatened to kill the Britons, sources told the Interfax news agency. By then, one commando and one of the kidnappers had died in a burst of fighting, and several others were injured.

The Foreign Office insisted that there was no evidence that the Britons were the subject of the rescue mission. A senior Chechen official said that the nationality of the hostages was unknown. Russian news agencies all reported that the hostages were the two missing Britons, Camilla Carr, 40, and Jon James, 37.

The failed mission came only a day after Aslan Maskhadov, the President of the chaotic Caucasus republic, returned home after a four-day trip to Britain in which he met Foreign Office officials to discuss the fate of the two aid workers. The President has repeatedly pledged to free the

hostages, who are among scores caught up in an epidemic of abductions that began in earnest after the Chechen war ended in mid-1996.

A group from the Chechen anti-terrorist squad came under fire after setting off for the small town of Urus-Martan, when they discovered that the hostages were held there. General Khunkarpasha Ismailov, chief of the Chechen anti-terrorist centre, told reporters that his team had been able to confirm the abductors not only hold the Britons, but also Chechens and one Ossetian. The rescue fighters "gave up the plan for eliminating the terrorists, realising the hostages' lives

were in danger," he said. He added he was confident of securing their release "in the near future". Meanwhile, in Grozny, the capital, officials raided an apartment block and arrested three people suspected of being involved in the hostage-taking. The couple were abducted by six masked gunmen last July after arriving in Grozny to help children traumatised by the war with Moscow.

Mr Maskhadov met Baroness Thatcher during his visit, and returned boasting that she had agreed to make a trip to Chechnya. That claim was denied by her spokesman, who suggested a misunderstanding in translation may have been to blame.

During Mr Maskhadov's visit, Lady Thatcher emphasised at length the importance of releasing hostages for any progress on relations between Britain and Chechnya.

In this respect, the former prime minister was remarkably on-message: the Foreign Office followed up with the same message as Lady Thatcher.

The families of the aid workers met Mr Maskhadov last week. Camilla Carr's sister, Alexandra Little, said yesterday: "[Maskhadov] spoke from the heart. They know that they can't rebuild their country and have foreign investment while this is going on."

Tiananmen hard man elected to lead parliament

By Teresa Poole
in Peking

LI PENG, the man who imposed martial law on Peking during the spring 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations, was yesterday elected head of China's Parliament, after an embarrassing 11 per cent of delegates failed to support his appointment. His election by the rubber-stamp National Party Congress (NPC) was no surprise - there was only one candidate.

Although the vote for Li Peng, 69, was much less favourable than the resounding 98 per cent in favour of Jiang Zemin's re-election as president, he may well have been relieved. In recent years, the NPC has become more strident in voicing dissatisfaction. Support for one vote last year dropped as low as 60 per cent. It was thought the protest vote against the hardline Mr Li would be higher than it turned out.

The assembly this week is putting in place the government that will lead China into the 21st century. Unlike in recent years, foreign journalists were not allowed to watch the voting in the Great Hall of the People, but were provided with the results in a separate room.

Under the constitution, Mr Li had to step down as prime minister after completing two full terms. He will retain his number two ranking in the Chinese leadership. Zhu Rongji, 69, will today be confirmed as China's new prime minister.

In a separate election, Ho Jintao, 55, was appointed China's vice president. This signals Mr Hu as the heir apparent to Mr Jiang, and designates him -

for the time being - as the man to head the next generation of Chinese leaders. Mr Hu made his political name as party secretary of Tibet, a job in which he was seen as a conservative rather than a reformer.

Analysts are weighing up how Mr Li's appointment may affect the political development of the NPC, which under the outgoing Qiao Shi, 73, had begun to take on a more robust defence of the "rule of law". Mr Qiao was unceremoniously ousted from his senior party positions last autumn, supposedly because of his

age, but in reality because of a rift with Mr Jiang.

Mr Li would not normally be thought of as the right man to further the development of China's parliamentary system, though he will need to boost the NPC if it is to act as a power-base for him. But, as a man who has built his career on unquestioning belief in the absolute power of the Communist Party, his vision of how the NPC should evolve is unlikely to give cause for hope to those who want to see political reform in China.

My Lai dead are honoured

Relatives and survivors of the 1968 My Lai massacre marked the anniversary of the slaughter of 500 civilians by US soldiers. Wreaths were placed at a monument to the victims and two US veterans who tried to halt the bloodbath urged that it never be forgotten. "Something terrible happened 30 years ago today," ex-helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson said. This month he was one of two men awarded the Soldier's Medal in Washington for their actions at My Lai.

— Reuters, My Lai, Vietnam

Veteran leads Armenia poll

As Armenians voted for a president yesterday, the Soviet-era Communist leader, Karen Demircian, led in most opinion polls, ahead of the Prime Minister, Robert Kocharian, the acting president, and former prime minister Vazgen Manukyan. A second round will be needed in two weeks if no one gains outright victory. Levon Ter Petrosian resigned last month over concessions he offered the Azeris to end a conflict over the Nagorno Karabakh region.

— Reuters, Yerevan

Rare parrot chips in

A kakapo chick hatched with human help in New Zealand, fuelling hopes for the species' survival. It brought to 57 the known population of the kakapo, a fat, flightless parrot. The egg was put in an incubator, where the chick struggled to clip out at the weekend.

— Reuters, Wellington

Shevardnadze hits at Moscow

President Eduard Shevardnadze criticised Russia for failing to extradite a man suspected of trying to kill him. He was referring to Igor Giorgadze, Georgia's former security chief, who fled to Moscow after Georgian officials charged him with organising a 1995 bombing of Mr Shevardnadze's motorcade. He has faced two assassination attempts in Georgia over the past three years.

Murder trial a bit of a drag

One of Greece's best-known folk musicians went on trial accused of murdering his daughter's married boyfriend. Alkis Panou, 64, fired into the face of Sotiris Yalamas, 29, in August in the village of Lefki. Yalamas died instantly in front of Panou and his daughter, pregnant with Yalamas's child. Mr Panou said his daughter's relationship with a married man shamed the family. He was well known for the song "My life is just one cigarette that I don't like, but drag away at it."

— AP, Kavala



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A very private obsession

Sarah Speir, who has suffered secretly from a compulsive disorder, explains how she was able to unburden herself

I DON'T know what to make of things just now. Confusion reigns triumphant. Things had never really been going well and the farewell party for my sister seemed to top it all off.

I'd had a hard time getting my hands clean before the party started. I have a problem with hygiene in that I wash my hands a lot. Most of the time I'm okay, but something triggered me off and no amount of ritualised routine was going to convince me I was sterile.

My family know about my problem and are really good about it, but they were busy greeting guests while I hid upstairs waiting for someone to come and find me. So it was attention-seeking, but sometimes you need sympathy showered on you. My mum did come looking, but over found me. Realising it was a lost cause and that there were now too many guests who didn't know about my wee problem, I did a flit and went in see Sally, my best friend.

She breezily asked why I was stopping her tidying spree when my voice faltered on reply. Continuing to wring my hands I explained that I couldn't get them clean and instinctively brought my shoulders in to encompass my quaking stance. I hated myself for crying, but also knew that Sally was the best person to console me. True to form she appeared with a Mr Men paper towel to dry my eyes.

We went back to my place, and made polite conversation with my parents' friends while Sally enquired as to my boyfriend's whereabouts. He was late as usual and to be honest I was glad as I was finding the relationship difficult. You see, I'd had this hygiene problem since I was about 13 and never thought I would find anyone who would understand the constraints it made on a relationship. When I met my boyfriend I didn't think he would understand either and decided not to tell him until absolutely necessary. The time came after a particularly full-on petting session when I failed to return from the bathroom. Amazingly we got through it and together we took on the illness for what it was. But now I was confused over my feelings for my boyfriend, feeling that perhaps I loved him as a friend rather than a boyfriend. I was also trying to silence a nagging thought: Was I staying with him because I believed that there couldn't be anyone else who would understand my worries? Throughout my illness, the focus of my worries revolved around wanting to hurt anyone. That's why I washed my hands - so I wouldn't pass some horrendous unknown disease to people.

When the phone rang I was so relieved he was all right. Then I asked what was keeping him.

My relief turned into shocked silence as he calmly told me he'd met someone and wanted to end the relationship. I put down the phone and headed back upstairs to my earlier hideout. For the second time that day I broke into tears, surprising myself at the pain that flowed out of these odes.

Meanwhile, the party appeared to be in full swing, with my mother's dulcet tones slaughtering "California Dreaming". Try as I might I couldn't hide in there for ever, so I headed for the bathroom to freshen up.

Pushing open the door I encountered Dave pitiously hugging the toilet.

"Oh sorry."

"Oh, hi, I feel sick," he declared in his usual monotonous tone.

"How much have you had to drink?"

"Don't know."

"Mind if I freshen up?"

"No, go ahead."

I studied my reflection. My cheeks were red but my eyes were okay. I ran the water. My palms welcomed the moisture.

You would never have guessed my hands were only 20 years old - they looked at least 60, gnarled and wrinkled as if I had been a fisherman in a past life.

I'd unconsciously begun the routine I follow when washing my hands. I find myself doing that sometimes, mostly after a particularly disturbing dream involving some hygiene epic. That's why I'm jokingly referred to as Lady Macbeth in my family. I didn't know how long Dave had been watching me for or in fact how long it had been since I came in - tonight was all muddled up. Time meant nothing.

Turning off the tap, I wiped my hands on my jumper. Forces of habit, after a bad spell on the question of the cleanliness of towels. I knelt down beside Dave and playfully tugged his shirt. "Hey wet hands, nobody ever teach you to use a towel?" I sat down, happy to find my niche. I'd always felt okay around him - there was something about his laid-back attitude to life that put me at ease.

The Swinging Sixties floated through the open window.

We'd reached Gerry and the Pacemakers when Dave retched.

I filled a beaker of water for him. "At least you got to the toilet," I said.

"Sorry."

Then he said: "I remember another time. The door was ajar and the tap was running. I went to turn it off when I heard crying. I saw you with soap all over your hands and about half way up your arms. I went back to the hall and waited to see if you were all right only you took ages and when you did come out you were drying your hands on your jersey just like you did tonight."



An affliction of the mind: Sarah Speir, who has felt compelled to wash excessively for seven years

Photograph: Colin McPherson

Sally came in and started rubbing your back as if to say "are you okay", all the time rubbing the soap off. It was then that I realised that Sally knew something I didn't and that you weren't happy."

I looked down at my feet. That was the most I'd ever heard Dave say at one time and the topic was the worst he could have chosen. Both of us were clearly embarrassed. We could have been love-struck teenagers on a first date awaiting the next move.

"I never realised. That was two years ago. Why haven't you said anything?"

"Say what? Why do you cry when you wash your hands then not use a towel? I figured you didn't want anyone to know, well, apart from Sally."

My ring was jammed on my knuckle now - oo amount of

twisting was helping. I'd only over told a few people of my problem and there was so much to consider when you did let them in. Would they treat you differently, act embarrassed around you or even tell others? I couldn't believe he'd seen me that night. Usually I'm good at hiding it. It's a recognised fact that people with my condition - obsessive compulsive disorder - are really good at keeping their illness from others.

A button on my cuff had come loose and was straining to be free from its threaded leash. "They think they're dirty all the time," I said. The button flew off, landing between us, the cheese in the mousetrap. "Found out my secret then?" I let my fringe hide my eyes.

For the third time that night, I was reduced to tears. Music from the party enforced the

depth of sadness and I wept words I'd stored only in the recess of my twisted mind.

"Dave, it's just the most horrible thing. I hate it you

Continuing to wring my hands, I explained that I couldn't get them clean

know. Every day. From the moment I get up. Putting my undies on, what if I brushed past them when I was putting them on. I must be dirty - wash my hands. Dry them. What's that

on the towel? You're begging yourself to accept that the brown patch is just dried blood from Brian or dad's razor cut, but that fucking stupid bit won't accept it. It must be shit. Why would that be on the towel - well you do dry yourself when you get out the bath and the shower don't you? There's always another bloody answer, always something to contradict your sane half.

"I hate it, just hate it. I wish, you know, it's just fucked up so much for me. I've missed my teenage years. I'm 20 but I've only experienced life up to about 14. It's so hard going out as you're sure you're still dirty. Terrified you're going to start some epidemic."

"Why couldn't I have something medicine could aid, perhaps even cure? Nobody's got a frigging clue what's going on

in my head. Least of all me. "Do you know what the worst thing is? All I've ever wanted is children. The maternal part of me is crying out to be released. But how is that going to happen, Dave, when any kind of genital secretion seeds me to the shower for hours?" My despair was overwhelming.

Dave shuffled over to me. An arm was tentatively placed around my shoulder; a cautious hand gently tugged my head into his chest. For someone who had hated contact of any kind, even from family, he knew he was needed. His flannel shirt soaked up my tears and we sat there together, weary souls listening to Lennon and McCartney drifting from below.

The names of the writer's friends have been changed.

FIGHTING THE FEAR

In *As Good As It Gets*, which opened in Britain last week, Jack Nicholson portrays a man obsessed with cleanliness who fears contact with strangers because of the germs they may be carrying. When the movie reaches Glasgow, Sarah Speir will be in the audience, partly because she is a film buff, and partly because she knows what an obsession with hygiene feels like from the inside.

Since she was 13 she has had a fear of dirt and germs which has driven her to wash her hands dozens, sometimes hundreds, of times a day.

Her parents first became aware of her compulsion when she stopped going out with her friends. After much coaxing, she explained that going into town meant shopping which meant handing over cash. Cash was "dirty" and she feared that she would spread germs and cause infections for which she would be to blame.

The strain on the family has been enormous. Sarah speaks warmly of her parents' support and they pay tribute to her bravery, but both acknowledge that her condition has dominated family life. "When she is down we are all down," her father says.

Sarah did well at school and got a place at university to study speech therapy, but she dropped out after 18 months, unable to take the strain. She is now working as a legal secretary in Edinburgh and hopes to go back to university.

Nobody knows how many sufferers there are from obsessive compulsive disorder because many keep their condition hidden. Estimates vary from one in 100 to one in 1,000. Its cause is not understood, although there is thought to be a strong genetic factor, but it is one of the most readily treatable conditions with behaviour therapy.

Sarah, who has been on anti-depressants for most of her adolescence, has been receiving therapy for the past four months, after years in which she refused help. It involves exercises in aversion therapy - being required to go out to the shops without washing her hands - tasks she finds very difficult but which, over time, should break down her compulsion. "I have minor upsets every now and then. But I am getting better," she says.

Jeremy Laurance

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DR PHIL HAMMOND

"THE TROUBLE with you is that you're not one of us any more - you're one of them." As criticism goes, I've had worse. "Smug self-satisfied medical toser" (Anon, *Edinburgh Festival Times*) and "unimpressive hiccup... makes you yearn to administer a lethal injection" (Cristina Odoce, *Daily Telegraph*) are my favourites. But when it comes from someone you respect it does tend to hit home. The critic in question is a GP who was

commenting on a *Trust Me*, I'm a Doctor feature exposing the fact that amniocentesis - the withdrawal through a needle of fluid surrounding an embryo for screening tests - is still being done in some centres in the UK without continuous ultrasound guidance. Without ultrasound you can never be sure where the needle will end up and it doesn't take a genius to figure out what might happen if it hits the placenta or baby.

"I'm not saying it doesn't happen," said Dr X (who wishes to remain that way) "but I'm just not sure whether any good will come of exposing it. You know as well as I do that the NHS is run on a shoestring budget and a consequence of that is the very patchy quality of the service. Whatever operation or procedure you care to name, some places do it well and some places do it badly. It's always been that way and it'll remain so without a substantial input of resources into medical training and manpower. The only thing that's changed is that programmes like yours are making the public think that instead of being thankful for whatever the NHS gives them,

they have a right to expect that whoever they see is up to date and competent. It's a nice sentiment but a million miles away from reality. So all you're doing is increasing public expectation beyond what the service can deliver and making it even tougher for doctors."

I was about to launch into a vigorous defence when I spotted another old colleague. Well not that old actually - she'd been an obstetric registrar when I was a senior house officer - but she's finally become a consultant and she looked bloody ancient. She was and still is a brilliant obstetrician, so why was she finding it so tough? "Litigation. I've got an in-tray this big with complaints going back 10 years. The sad thing is that I know that in nearly every case nothing negligent happened. On one occasion, a junior doctor made a mistake but even then she was doing her best given the conditions and I don't think it affected the outcome. But people expect you to get it right first time, every time and they think medical science has miraculous solutions to everything. I love the work but if anything drives me away

from it, it'll be the lawyers."

I spent a day or so feeling sorry for obstetricians until Sacha Bayestock, the series producer on *Trust Me*, told me of a phone call she'd received from a woman who'd had a "blind" amniocentesis done in Manchester. The obstetrician didn't even speak to her, stuck the needle in three times without ultrasound guidance, drew blood on each occasion, gave up and walked out. Not only does it risk causing miscarriage, but the baby may survive with brain damage. Oxford pathologist Wayne Squire has studied the brains of a number of (now deceased) children with severe brain injury at birth who'd had amniocentesis and can date the time of the injury to the time of the procedure. In addition, the babies had puncture marks in their skulls. The tragedy is that continuous ultrasound guidance has been available for 10 years and when used properly, the chances of hitting the baby during amniocentesis are very much reduced. The Royal College of Obstetricians insists continuous monitoring must be used but some obstetricians either don't bother or

haven't been trained. Time to stop feeling sorry for doctors. I have mixed emotions and divided loyalties about medicine every time we film *Trust Me*. Doctors are under enough pressure without the glare of the media but the General Medical Council and Royal Colleges alone just don't seem to have the teeth to sort out the problems of incompetence. For all the patchy quality procedures we've exposed (breast cancer surgery, cleft lip and palate repair, hip replacements and now amnio) the doctors who are doing it well always give patients the same advice. Ask the person who's doing it how often they do it, whether they're following established guidelines and what results they get. It's a sad reflection on the state of medical training if patients have to check that their doctor is doing the job properly, and I've never yet met a patient who's had the balls to do it. But most doctors are competent and should not be threatened by the request, and it's currently your best chance of avoiding a bodger. As a surgeon once said to me "blind trust in anyone is a risky business."

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INC210

ssion Tudors go to our heads

The history of Henry VIII and his heirs, like that of the Windsors, was a soap opera with the quality of Greek myth. And we can't get enough of it. By Jack O'Sullivan

YOU might think that the idea of chaps in doublet and hose, stiff ruff necks and big floppy head gear finally sank with the Spanish Armada. But who knows these days? The Tudors are suddenly hip and the fashion folk are on the case. Vivienne Westwood has taken to dressing up as Elizabeth I and Isabella Blow, self-styled muse of the Cool Britannia designers, is urging her protégés, Philip Treacy and Alexander McQueen, to think half-Tudor.

Meanwhile, in political circles, the talk is oh so Tudor, of Britain as once again a buccannering, enterprising state, unencumbered by empire, a country of Francis Drakes, a nation casting aside stuffy old ways in favour of storming off confidently into modernity.

And, of course, the royal parallels are clear enough. The dilemmas of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles would have been well understood to Henry VIII's day, when a king had occasionally to dump a wife or two. The House of Tudor, like the Windsors, "provided an extraordinary supply of family dramas, soap operas which had the quality of Greek myth".

The speaker is: David Starkey, LSE historian, whose three-part Channel 4 series on the life of Henry began on Sunday. In making his documentary, Dr Starkey apparently has a problem. There is not much visual material, apart from a few Holbeins, to work from. But that does not bother him. Each time some fresh twist in the Tudor drama unfolds, he need only zoom in on the present royal family or to-

day's politicians to find an illustration of history repeating itself. "What has happened in recent years is exactly the same," says Starkey, "except that Diana and Sarah did not have their heads cut off".

He is not alone. Others fascinated by the Tudors include the makers of a forthcoming film focusing on the love life of Elizabeth I which has sparked a debate on whether she was in fact a virgin. Maria Perry, the actress and historian, who has published a book on the tumultuous lives of Henry's sisters (one married three after two divorces) and Peter Ackroyd, whose new work explores the rise and fall of Henry's right-hand man, Thomas More.

Lord Irvine behaves with the arrogance and extravagance that led to the demise of Henry's Lord Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey. And, of course, a scene from Elizabeth's court, in the style of *Blackadder II* (conspicuously being repeated) is being used in an advert for Hootie Hoops.

It is tempting to point out, in the face of all this interest, that the Tudors have long been a favourite of the fashion world. It was, after all, something of a golden age which saw the flowering of the English language. Charles Laughton established his career on the strength of his Oscar-winning performance in the 1934 movie, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. Glenda Jackson may end up as Mayor of London on the basis of her stern performance as Elizabeth I in the Seventies BBC dramatisation of her reign.

Starkey acknowledges that the era has had near universal appeal. "Henry VIII," he says, "has genuinely mythic status."

He has become the English Bluebeard. The best stories about the Tudors call for and can stand endless repetition. But the period seems to have a particular resonance today. "Partly it is because it was an age of great portraiture and pageantry, when, like today, so much attention was paid to visual image," says Maria Perry. She recalls a lavish event in 1520, known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold, when fountains flowed with claret in a massive display of wealth designed to impress Francis I of France when he met Henry VIII to talk peace. It was the type of event, branding England as rich and powerful, of which Peter Mandelson would have been proud.

Starkey also sees the Tudor period as offering vital insights into what post-imperial Britain should aspire to. "We are now," he says, "in exactly the same position as in Henry's day. We are top of the European second division. Then Henry created the Eurosceptic nation by cutting England off from the European Catholic church and creating the Church of England. He established a sense that the nation was God's vehicle on earth. And the Elizabethan period became a time of great exploration throughout the world."

"Blair threatens to destroy the changes Henry made in return for a future in Europe that nobody understands. He is going against the grain of 500 years."



Elizabethan extravaganza: Vivienne Westwood in 'Five Centuries ago' dress Photograph: Gian Paolo Barbieri

There is, in short, an intellectual battle going over the Tudor legacy, with Blair's people claiming to be the true believers. Mark Leonard, whose work for Demos on rebranding Britain has been a key influence on the Government, argues that the Tudor period demonstrated qualities of nationhood which the present government is now pursuing.

"There was an openness to the world. In those days foreigners regarded this country as one of expressive, emotional people, not of stiff upper lip types. We started to rediscover this character after Diana's death and over Louise Woodward. Fashion was over the top and in your face, quite resonant of British fashion today. It was, like now, a very creative period - the Tudors created the Church of England, the Navy, the monarchy as we came to know it and what came to be regarded as classical British institutions."

Leonard, author of *Britain - Renewing Our Identity*, rejects Starkey's image of Henry as founder of the Eurosceptics. "His marriages were designed to create alliances with European countries. He led an international lifestyle. The heroes of the period such as Shakespeare were internationally minded. And Henry could speak several languages. He was a quintessential European."

But in recent weeks, Mrs Parker Bowles has found herself back in the headlines. Earlier this month, it was revealed that she has been staying at St James's Palace, Charles's London residence. Now comes the revelation that she had been Charles's guest at a weekend party at Sandringham. According to one source, the couple will soon be seen together in public, probably at a charity function. But she will not host any public events on behalf of the National Osteoporosis Society as previously planned.

The most significant date in the resumed rehabilitation of Mrs Parker Bowles will be 14 November, Charles's 50th birthday, when it is likely that

Mr Mandelson has subsequently become close to the couple and has lunched with them at Highgrove. Mr Mandelson has also played a major role influencing the discussions by the Way Ahead group - the Royal Family's own think tank - about revolutionising the monarchy.

Whether this will also include the idea of Camilla as Queen Consort is open to debate. The Church has already been softened up regarding a possible marriage. The British people are the problem. It may be a long time before the thousands who mourned Princess Diana are prepared to accept a replacement.

Tim Hulse



Battle royal: Camilla Parker Bowles and the Prince of Wales



'I walked on the dancefloor and I was treated like the messiah'

REVELATIONS: PETE TONG

The time: February 1998
The place: Derby
The man: Pete Tong - DJ

"I'VE ONLY just been coming to terms with the fact that I'm famous. Even though I've been on the radio all my adult life. I started at Radio 1 as a journalist/guest DJ in 1979 so I've transcended generations of clubbers. Up till recently, being on the radio might have made you notorious, but never famous. The DJ as a superstar has been very strange for me, I have to pinch myself. All I do is walk into a club and people go wild. I think 'it's only me, all I've got is a box of records'."

The intensity of the cult of

personality really hit me last month at a club in Derby, people outside London and the South-east are a little less cynical. Although I'd worked at Progress in Derby in the past, I don't go out on the road very much - especially now that I have a family. So getting me back to places is very difficult, but this year I've returned to people who earlier in my career supported me big time."

When I was finally given my own Radio 1 show, back in 1991, it was the only dance DJ. The other jocks were still just chasing the money and being booked into the chicken and chips on Wednesday nights - like Bruno Brookes and Pete



Powells officers gone by. Although I was really well known, credible and played at all the right places in the South-east, everywhere else, being a Radio 1 DJ, I was not the coolest person. So I'd plied Derby and actually begged for a gig."

I hadn't seen the owner of Progress for seven years. He got me to meet him in the town centre because the club had moved to a pedestrian walkway and he needed to guide me in. He was amazed by the response. I've never seen crowds

like it. Last time you played for me, you couldn't even mix. I don't believe it. I've turned 2,000 people away tonight. It's gonna clear me out, because you're charging a fortune, but I don't mind. Just tell me what you've done. The truth was that I don't know!"

I entered through the back door of his club, word went through like wildfire, there was an incredible buzz. I walked on the dance floor and I was treated like the messiah! I'm not a pop star and I don't want to be one but that's all I can liken it to. The crowd parted and they wanted to stroke me, shake my hand, kiss me - and it was just as much the boys as the girls. It was stupid and over the top but they were beautiful people and I was really pleased. Even

before I played my first record there was a massive cheer and everybody ran to the front."

It's a funny job - all I'm doing is playing somebody else's records! The adulation is quite uncomfortable, although I'm proud of my ability to entertain. I feel I should be doing more - like juggling."

Also in the last six months, because my mix albums have been phenomenally successful, selling 700,000 copies, which is more than anything else in my genre has ever sold, I've been asked what I should do with myself. All these doors are being opened that I haven't gone knocking on. Perhaps it's a flaw in my character that I'm not more ambitious to do bigger and better things."

I'm both excited and scared.

Half of me thinks this is a young person's business and I'm an old bastard, 37, much older than the average age of my club-going audience, who are somewhere between 18 and 25. I always wanted to go out at the top and do something sensible instead. Maybe I should grow up. Yet the other side says nobody has ever got old being a club DJ before - there's no red card yet and I'm not being ordered off stage. At the moment it's too exciting and personally challenging to quit. I'm the equivalent of Alan Shearer in the DJ world - so the money is good too!"

My show has grown immensely in popularity, without sounding too conceited, it has attracted some cultural significance for young people because so many live for the weekend.

With the new era of Britism I've been selling the BBC programmes, so I'm behind getting a lot of my so-called competitors, like Judge Jules and Tim Westwood, on to Radio 1.

I've gone from underground to massively overground and now attend John Birt's cocktail parties. I'm quite interested in television next, with the expansion of digital, cable and satellite, there are lots of opportunities. Nobody with my knowledge has been given the challenge of putting club culture on to the box. Nothing has worked before because it's always been done by TV people who know nothing about clubbing."

Pete Tong is on Radio 1 - Friday nights between 9pm and 9pm. Interview by Andrew G Marshall

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Dr Benjamin Spock

TO MILLIONS of parents all over the world, Benjamin Spock was the great baby-guru: the man who wrote *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. To millions of Americans, he was the peacemaker of the Sixties; the man who incited decent American youth to burn draft cards rather than fight in Vietnam and almost went to jail for it. 30 million of women he was an enemy, advocating liberation for children at the expense of their mothers; and for a period he was a dangerous radical, butt of men like Spiro Agnew who called all hippies "the work of Spock", and Mayor Daley who blamed the riots of Chicago on his "corrupting influence".

So what was Benjamin Spock? If we separate Spock the man, Spock the paediatrician and Spock the politician, we lose sight of a whole that was infinitely greater than the sum of those parts.

His lifetime spanned every decade of this century. Born in 1903, the young Ben had a strict and mildly eccentric "bluestocking" mother and a stern, distant father who was full of recitatives and empty of joy. Shy, lanky and much-teased, Spock grew up God-fearing and full of inner uncertainties. His family fitted into a neighbourhood and society crisscrossed with rigid barriers of race, sex and religion; wealth, status and generation. The same barriers that kept everyone in an ascribed place also ensured a place for each, producing what Spock once described as "a paradox of authoritarian security". Sixty years later he could still remember his amazement when his 6ft 4in frame gave him success as a Yale oarsman and took him to the 1924 Olympics and the beginnings of self-esteem.

It was a summer job in a camp for handicapped children that turned Spock towards medicine and it was his own childhood experiences combined with the conventional symptom-based medicine of the time would not satisfy him. While America laboured through the Depression, Ben Spock laboured

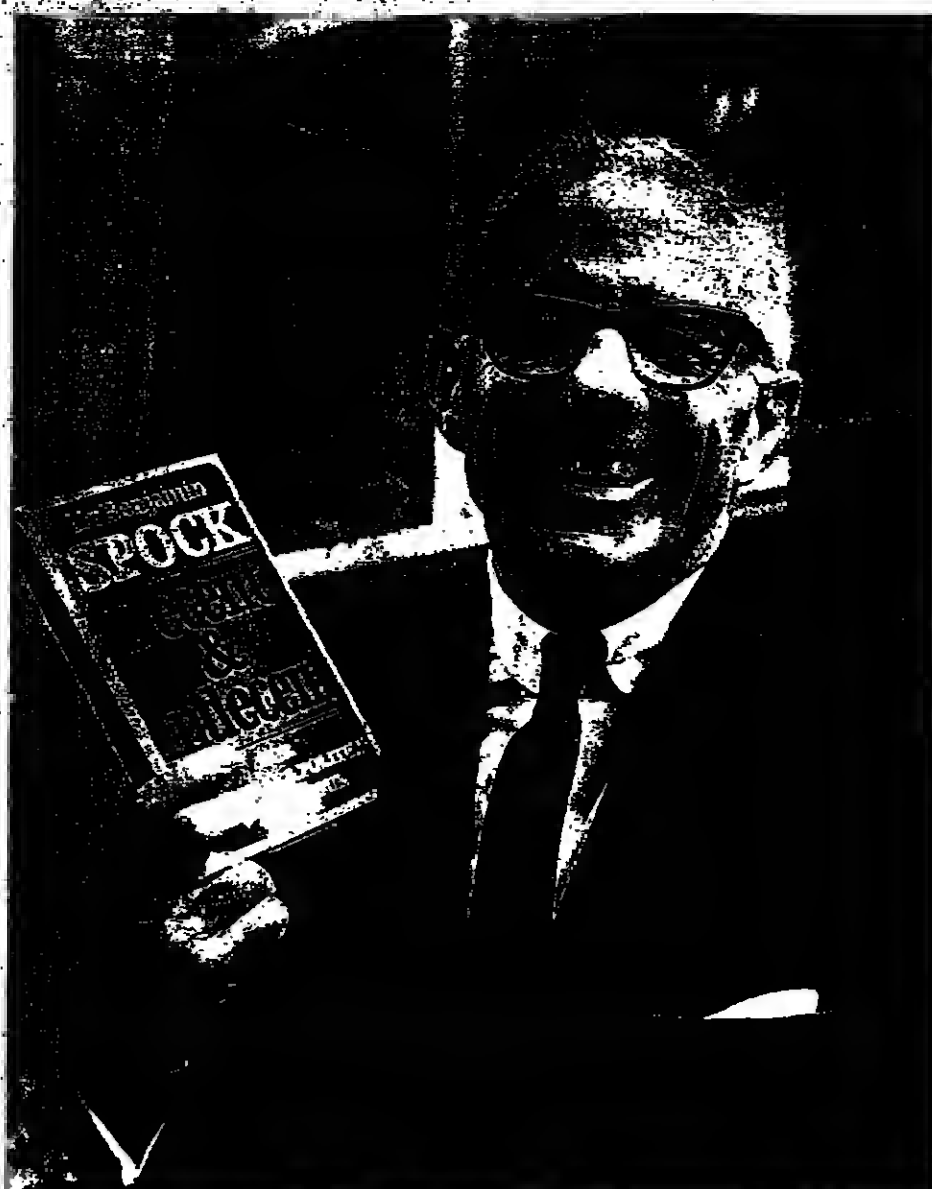
through medical school, married, read Freud, added psychiatry to specialisation in paediatrics - an unheard-of combination - and underwent a personal psychoanalysis.

By the time Dr Spock set up his Manhattan paediatric practice in the Thirties, he had decided that children were people and determined to treat them as such. Parents were astounded to find the doctor in a lounge suit instead of an alarming white coat and his waiting room full of toys. They were even more taken aback when he insisted on talking to their children about feelings, as well as to them about those children's bowels.

The Spock of the Forties was too peacemic; indeed the book that was to change everything for parents and children was delayed by his stint as a naval psychiatrist ("I believed in that war, you see"). He was not a chauvinist or a radical either. He was a children's doctor. He assumed the continuation of the secure moral values of the past, but believed that a society shaken up by war could reform itself without the unfeeling authoritarianism which had distorted his own childhood development and which he believed to be an unnecessary burden on family life for everyone.

He wanted to oust the combative spectre of Original Sin so that parents could enjoy their children: "Your baby isn't a schemer. [He] is a reasonable, friendly human being. If you treat him nicely, he won't take advantage of you." And he wanted to offer parents who now found themselves isolated from traditional family support systems a new security of belief in themselves: "You know more than you think you do," the book began.

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Childcare was published in 1946 and sold three quarters of a million copies in the first year - an amazing number for that time and topic. Spock now divided his time between child development research and parent education, while his message spread through his country and through the world. The way we think about and rear children



Spock: 'Your baby is a reasonable, friendly human being'

Photograph: Hulton Getty

has never been the same again nor ever will be. So all-pervasive did his work become that even those who have never read one of the 50 million copies of the book have been indirectly influenced by what started inside its covers and became an integral part of Western culture.

So why did Benjamin Spock not stay with the baby-guru role and keep away from politics? As always, with him, the simple answer was "children's well-being".

During the Fifties Spock the children's doctor, saw a

rapid increase in childhood leukemias and a rise in Strontium 90 in bones. Spock the man spoke up against the nuclear testing that was causing this tragic trend and Spock the politician was born of the discovery that a man who might carry "the mother's vote" was very, very welcome in Washington. "Dr Spock is for my husband and I am for Dr Spock," hissed Jacqueline Kennedy during the 1960 presidential campaign.

But Kennedy managed to control neither nuclear testing nor the Vietnam war and by

1962 Spock was Chairman of Sane (the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy). The Johnson campaign of 1964 brought Spock to angry disillusionment. Johnson obtained his support with specific guarantees to halt nuclear testing if he was elected. Immediately after his election he ordered testing to be resumed. One can still hear Spock the good and moral man through Spock the political innocent who said, "It was impossible for me not to react with extreme indignation."

His political innocence was over. The Vietnam war, which

he regarded as "one of the dirtiest wars that has ever been fought", was escalating. Unemployment and inflation were spiralling. He saw poverty and social injustice everywhere and only the mothers and young people who marched with him in thousands seemed to care: "Two-thirds of Americans would give up the Bill of Rights in order to justify throwing young protesters in jail."

Spock was a leading figure in the campaign against the Vietnam war throughout the Sixties and in 1968 was indicted for encouraging young Americans to burn their draft cards. He was convicted and, though the Appeal Court saved him from serving his prison sentence, "The whole experience radicalised me. I realised that the United States had always been as imperialist as it dared to be."

In 1970 he published a book called *Decent and Indecent: our personal and political behaviour* in which he tried to communicate his deep concern for the personal materialism and political corruption he saw all around him. Eventually he was to help to found the People's Party and to run, halfheartedly, for President in 1972.

In the meantime, though, his enormous influence over millions of young Americans, many of them "Spock babies" grown up, made him a no-holds-barred target for those he saw as oppressors: supporters of Johnson - "the biggest bully of all time"; and Nixon - "an authoritarian man". There was scarcely an ill in a sick society for which he was not held responsible and even the new edition of *Baby and Child Care*, published in the same year that he faced imprisonment, was turned against him. In this new edition, Spock sought to remind people that children need to learn from parents the very qualities he saw diminishing in society: a sense of values; of service rather than self-gratification; of sensitivity to others as well as to self.

Perhaps the message was too painful for parents; certainly it was untimely, since home and children were unfashionable topics that risked the ire of a

women's movement that had not yet begun to come to terms with maternity. "I hope you realise that you are a major oppressor of women, in the company of Sigmund Freud," thundered Gloria Steinem.

Spock later described the Seventies as "a difficult time for me". Countless sensational articles appeared, accusing him of the double crime of having been the architect of the "permissive society" and now of trying, too late, to reverse himself. For the first time, sales of the book plummeted. In 1974 a magazine called the *Red Book* published a run-of-the-mill article he wrote in a form so sensational it seemed like an attempt at character assassination. In 1975 nearly half a century's marriage ended in divorce. In 1976 he married again and published yet another edition of the book, freed of sexism and carefully referring to babies as "they" ("It makes them sound a bit like a crowd though," he commented regretfully).

Although Spock accepted the charge of sexism in his earlier writing, he never truly felt himself to be a chauvinist, nor could anyone who knew him charge him with being so. As always, his attitudes to wider social issues, including feminism, were shaped by his concern for children: "Of course women as people have as much right to careers as people who are men. That simply emphasises the obvious fact that men have as much responsibility as their wives in who is going to take care of the children."

Spock the man was still first and foremost Dr Spock the paediatrician and it was his concern for the child who must be father (or mother) to the man (or woman) which had always shaped his political activity - and did so until his death. He explained his underlying concerns in an interview with the *Observer* in 1969 far better than anyone can do it for him: "We live in a disenchanted, disillusioned age - not about things but about human beings... I believe that Man's disengagement is based on a misunderstanding of his nature. He is idealistic in his aspirations. His relationships are primarily spiritual."

His capacity for abstract reasoning has enabled him to discover much of the meaning of the universe. He has created beauty in all the arts. All this has been made possible by the aspirations kindled in him in early childhood by his adoration of his parents. Whether or not a man has religious faith, he can believe in the power of love and in Man's potentialities for good, if he understands the spiritual development of the child.

Benjamin Spock was still fighting irrepressibly for children in 1988, at the age of 85, when I was privileged to share a platform with him and Betty T. Brazelton, America's leading academic and favourite television paediatrician. Hundreds of Boston parents expected practical advice on combining childcare with their jobs, but our preliminary conversations were all about society's failure to give parenting the status and economic priority it deserves. Our conversation was becoming desperate: "Dr Spock, can't you say something about the need for more nursery schools?" she begged.

"No," replied Spock firmly. "I'm entirely convinced that all our troubles grow out of this materialist, capitalist society and it's no good tinkering with that by saying we need more nursery schools." Looking at her appalled face, he roared with laughter and added: "The whole damned political and economic system must be changed. That's what I'm going to say and I bet that's what Penny's going to say too."

Next morning, as we waited to enter the lecture hall, she tried one last appeal: "People, this meeting is supposed to be about babies. Can't you be a bit less political?"

"Babies are political," Benjamin Spock replied. "Babies are what politics is all about."

Penelope Leach

Benjamin Spock, paediatrician; born New Haven, Connecticut, 2 May 1903; Professor of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh 1931-55; Professor of Child Development, Western Reserve University 1955-67; married 1927 Jane Cheney (two sons; marriage dissolved 1975); 1976 Mary Morgan (one stepdaughter); died San Diego, California 15 March 1998.

Peter Livesey

PETER LIVESEY drove British rock climbing to new standards during the Seventies.

His speed, strength and stamina were developed young as a Yorkshire schoolboy running at national champion level. The seniors in his club included Derek Ibbotson, who had the current record for the mile, and the young Livesey developed the same kind of competitive dedication. He also had a natural talent for other outdoor sports, branching out into canoeing, rock climbing and caving. For a while he concentrated his efforts underground, becoming one of the best cavers in the world, joining expeditions to Jamaica, Greece and Ghar Paru, in Iran. It was only in his late twenties that he turned seriously to rock climbing.

His impact on the climbing world was almost immediate, starting in 1971 in the intimi-

dating gorge of Gordale Scar with the first free ascent of Face Route, previously climbed only with the aid of steel pegs. That was the first of many bold, strenuous routes up fiercely overhanging limestone. As his close friend and climbing partner, John Sheard, put it, "For Pete to apply the definition 'rock climber' to himself, it had to include the unspoken prefix 'best'; anything else was playing around." A few might nuzzle over "best" but all would probably agree that Livesey brought a whole new attitude to the sport.

First there was his athletic background. The stamina, strength and speed developed as a schoolboy gave him a natural edge, which he honed by systematic training on the then new indoor climbing walls, particularly during his exile for a year's teacher training practice in the lowlands of Souththorpe. That

dedicated approach to training was new, but mere athletic skills were not enough to succeed hundreds of feet off the ground on steep, potentially dangerous rock, following intricate lines of tiny holds which others had never tried to link before. Here mental control was everything.

John Sheard, who followed him up countless routes, observes: "Pete was totally competent and safe on things which would have killed the rest of us. He had an amazing ability to hang around and rest - and place fiddly protective equipment - on overhanging rock. When you got there you just couldn't see how he did it."

Livesey left his mark far beyond the microcosmic world of Yorkshire climbing, particularly in 1974, when he discovered the tenuous, improbable line of Footless Crow, on Goat Crag, in Borrowdale. Later that year

he travelled to Snowdonia to leave his signature on a cliff redolent with history - Dinas Cromlech. This was the scene of Joe Brown's great Fifties climb, Cenotaph Corner. Twenty-two years on, Livesey tackled the seemingly blank right wall of the great square-cut corner, linking a complex series of moves up tiny flakes of dolomite. Right Wall is now an exhilarating classic enjoyed by hundreds of competent climbers, reared on a hundred gyms and armed with sophisticated modern protection devices. Twenty-four years ago it was an imaginative step into the unknown.

Beyond the parochial confines of British climbing, Livesey sought the scale of grander cliffs. In Norway he made the second ascent of the 5,000m-high Troll Wall. In the Dolomites he free-climbed some of the great walls climbed



Livesey: mental control

Photograph: Geoff Birdes

originally with artificial aid. In Austria's Kaisersgrube he amazed the locals with his speed and stamina. In Provence, he showed what could be done in the stupefying Gorge du Verdon, where local experts rested on *in situ* steel pegs - and pulled

up on them when things got a bit tough - Livesey climbed free, relying on ingenuity and the strength in his fingers.

His most elegant and celebrated new route here was Fichte Nibou, although his own knobby-kneed climbing style

was more effective than elegant. He also dressed in the kind of stylish hand-me-down rags which would appal today's lycra-coordinated Gallic athletes.

Livesey also left his mark in California's famed Yosemite Valley. A partner on the first ascent of "Carbon Wall" recalls that, unknown to the rest of the team, Livesey made a recone the day before the climb, abseiling down the 500 feet of the route to inspect the difficulties. "It was typical of Livesey: he was always one step ahead of everyone else, particularly Ron Fawcett - he had to find ways to outwit Ron, because Ron really was the best climber in the world."

The young protégé, Fawcett, eventually surpassed the master and, after climbing his Cheedale swansong Goldeo Mile in 1981, Livesey more or less quit rock climbing. He turned to orienteering, excelling

at that pursuit just as he had done at all the others.

Pete Livesey directed the well-respected outdoor pursuits course at Ilkley and Bradford Community College and served on several committees of the British Mountaineering Council, but his greatest legacy is the actual climbs he created and the impact he made on rock climbing. He took his own climbing very seriously but the inner intensity was masked by a mischievous sense of humour and by moments of inspired theatricality, such as the time he made one of the first free ascents of the famous Welsh climb Tensar, solo, in Hush Puppies.

Stephen Venables

Peter Michael Livesey, mountaineer; born Huddersfield 12 September 1948; married Sara (one daughter); died Malham, North Yorkshire 26 February 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

HEWES / BURNS: On 13 February, to Deborah and Jonathan, a son, Edward Carl John, a brother for Emily and Theo.

HOLLAND: On 12 March, in London, to Victoria (née Joffe) and David, a son (Matthew Theodore Orlando).

MARRIS: On Friday 13 March 1998 at the John Radcliffe, Oxford, to Barbara (née Anderson) and Laurence, a son, Alexander Laurence, a brother for Francesca.

DEATHS

SINDEN: Edith Sybella (née Packer), widow of Thomas Willard, of Middlesbrough, died Wednesday 11 March, funeral service 12.30pm 20 March at St Margaret's Church, Barningham, Middlesbrough, and 1.30pm at Victoria Park Crematorium, Middlesbrough. Afterwards, all friends warmly invited to join Edith's family at the Blackthorn Trust, St Andrew's Road, Middlesbrough. Donations to the Blackthorn Trust via St Andrew's Road, 2 Thornhill Place, Middlesbrough ME14 2SR 01622 754663.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

RAJAK: Dr Rajak, A Memorial Service for Dr Rajak will be held in St George's, Hanover Square, on Tuesday 21 April 1998 at 11.30am.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds an Engagement at Buckingham Palace. Changing of the Guard. The Household Cavalry Mounted Band will play in the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Sir William Aldous, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 52; Mr Patrick Allen, actor, 71; Professor John Baines, Egyptologist, 52; Mr Jeff Banks, fashion designer, 56; Sir Donald Barron, former chairman, Midland Bank, 77; Mr Gavin Campbell, actor and television presenter, 52; Sir John Chalfrey, Lord Mayor of London, 67; Professor David Dicks, Vice-Chancellor, Hull University, 60; Miss Lesley Ann Down, actress, 44; Mr Patrick Duffy, actor, 49; Miss Emma Geyson, soprano, 51; Vice-Admiral Sir Donald Gibson, 82; Sir Arthur Hockaday, former Secretary and Director-General, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 72; Professor George Hughes, zoologist, 73; Mr Robin Knox-Johnston, yachtsman, 59; Professor John Lill, concert pianist, 54; Mrs Penelope Lively, author, 65; Sir Ramsay Melhuish, former ambassador to Thailand, 66; The Most Rev Keith O'Brien, Roman Catholic Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, 64; Mr Paul Redcliffe, former ambassador to Cambodia, 53; Sir Patrick Reilly, former diplomat, 89; 1912: Marie Stopes opened her first birth control clinic in London, 1921: Today is the St Patrick's Day and the Feast Day of the Martyrs of the Seven Sleepers, St Gertrude of Nivelles, St Joseph of Arimathea and St Paul of Cyprus.

Lectures

National Portrait Gallery: Matthew Sturgis, 'Anthony Beardsley', 1.10pm.

Royal Institution: Ralph Barrett, Susan Aldridge, Irena McCabe, Harry Cole, 'Public Debate: the doomed space station', 7pm.

Anniversaries

Birth: Thomas Chalmers, minister, philanthropist and author, 1780; Edmund Keen, actor, 1789; Pasquale

Stenialso Mancini, statesman, 1817; Jean Ingelow, poet, 1820; Gottlieb Daimler, automobile pioneer, 1834; Kate Greenaway, artist and children's book illustrator, 1846; Margaret Grace Bonfield, the first woman cabinet minister, 1873; Nat "King" Cole (Nathaniel Adams Cole), singer and pianist, 1919; Rudolf Hametowich Nureyev, ballet star and director, 1938; Deshaire Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, playwright and poet, 1741; Gilbert Burnet, bishop and historian, 1787; Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel, astronomer and mathematician, 1846; Christian Johann Doppler, physicist, 1835; Robert Chambers, publisher and author, 1871; Li-Gen Sir John Bagot Gubb (Gubb Pasha), commander of the Arab Legion, 1986; Helen Hayes (Helen Hayes Brown), actress, 1903; Mai Elisabeth Zetterling, actress and filmmaker, 1994. On this day the Duchy of Cornwall was created, 1337; Oliver Cromwell declared England a Commonwealth, 1649; Captain Lawrence Oates, with Scott's expedition, walked out into the Antarctic wastes, never to return, 1912; Marie Stopes opened her first birth control clinic in London, 1921: Today is the St Patrick's Day and the Feast Day of the Martyrs of the Seven Sleepers, St Gertrude of Nivelles, St Joseph of Arimathea and St Paul of Cyprus.

Lectures

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LAW REPORT: 17 MARCH 1998

Part-time worker's claim did not depend on sex

Jeasathan v London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham; Court of Appeal (Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery) 26 February 1998.

A MALE part-time worker in the public sector who had been dismissed prior to the amendment of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 by the Employment Protection (Part-Time Employees) Regulations 1995 was entitled to claim for redundancy and unfair dismissal in the same way as a female employee.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of VJ. Jeasathan against the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal to reverse the decision of the Industrial Tribunal, which had granted him leave to amend his originating application in his claim against his employer, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

The applicant, a Sri Lankan national, began employment with the council in November 1990 as a maths teacher at HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs. He worked eight hours a week for three years, and his fixed term contract expired on 30 July 1993 and was not renewed.

In his originating application filed with the Industrial Tribunal the applicant identified his type of complaint as "racial discrimination". The council expressly denied that the applicant had been discriminated against on the ground of his race, and alleged that the sole reason for the decision not to offer him a new contract was that a part-time maths teacher was not required for that academic year. The applicant subsequently applied to amend his originating application to include claims for unfair dismissal and redundancy payment.

Brian Langstaff QC (Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre) for the ap-

pellant; Nigel Giffin (Head of Legal Services, Hammersmith and Fulham) for the council.

Lord Justice Mummery said that the crucial point, which had emerged for the first time on the present appeal, was whether, in consequence of the decision of the House of Lords in *R v Secretary of State for Employment, ex p Equal Opportunities Commission* [1995] 1 AC 1 (the EOC case), a male part-time worker employed in the public sector was entitled to claim a redundancy payment and compensation for unfair dismissal in respect of a dismissal occurring before the amendment of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 by the Employment Protection (Part-Time Employees) Regulations 1995.

In the EOC case the Equal Opportunities Commission had been granted judicial review of provisions of the 1978

Act, which limited the right to a redundancy payment and protection against unfair dismissal to employees who were able to satisfy the qualifying periods for entitlement. The House of Lords had decided that those provisions were incompatible with EC law and had declared that, in cases covered by them, the qualifying periods for redundancy payments and unfair dismissal were dispensed.

The House of Lords had held that judicial review was not the appropriate procedure to adjudicate on the claims of Mrs Day, an individual applicant joined in the proceedings, but that the Industrial Tribunal would have jurisdiction to decide the questions of indirect discrimination under EC law raised on the judicial review application.

The applicant was in the same jurisdictional position as Mrs Day, and claimed to be entitled to pursue his claims in reliance on the general decla-

rations in the EOC case regarding "employees" and not just "female employees". The council argued that Mrs Day had been entitled to rely on the declarations of incompatibility with EC law by reason of indirect discrimination against women, and that the applicant had not been discriminated against on the ground of sex.

Those submissions, however, involved a fundamental confusion both of the general propositions of law in the EOC case, which had dispensed the qualifying periods in respect of employees generally, regardless of sex, and of the nature of the applicant's complaint. He did not complain of sex discrimination, but claimed unfair dismissal and redundancy pay. It would be unjust to refuse to allow the applicant to amend his claim, and the order of the Industrial Tribunal would accordingly be restored.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

THE INDEPENDENT

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Justice is justice, even 80 years late

PEOPLE'S TRUST in their system of government waxes and wanes – though there has, it's true, been more of the latter recently than the former, which is one good reason Labour should, with the Liberal Democrats' support, press on with the agenda of constitutional change and renewal. Yet, while we are suspicious of politicians, we still have an impressive faith in the ability of the state to deliver justice, especially by reopening and reviewing cases where people intensely feel an injustice has been done.

The passion of the Lawrence family, so cruelly let down by the criminal justice system; the determination of the Hillsborough victims' relatives; the anger (and puzzlement) of those deprived of a loved one by CJD – there is no guarantee that state inquiries after the event will answer all the questions raised in these cases, or heal the emotional wounds. But the process of truth-seeking and, where appropriate, of blaming, can have useful healing properties. There are those who say the British constitution in its unwritten state is really a matter of proper procedure – outcomes matter less than the fact of fair dealings. Certainly, such inquiries into failed procedure must be conducted by people who are above every suspicion. The Lawrence family's misgivings about the lawyers involved in the investigation of why Stephen's killers were not brought to justice must be quietened, by a change of personnel if necessary.

It is in a similar spirit that we think the request for a general pardon by relatives of British soldiers shot for cowardice during the First World War should be met. Their argument is based partly on this point about procedure. Due process, even by the standards of a British Army at war, was not always observed; relevant evidence was not always presented; the circumstances of the front were not taken into account. Because trials were faulty, the results were unjust. The men's descendants make another point, too. Cowardice in the trenches was not a moral deficiency but (we might nowadays be tempted to say) an almost rational response to horror; many of the men were suffering almost unimaginable torment in an industrial-scale carnage house.

Their execution cast a stain on individual soldiers, their families and those who remember them. In opposition, Labour, including the armed forces minister himself, seemed to accept the need to wipe it clean. A number of MPs, some of them now in the Cabinet, voted for a general pardon. They were right then. Now they are wrong if – as reports suggest – they are backsliding and having second thoughts.

Of course it is going to be difficult to distil every case, however accurate the remaining paperwork; of course not every verdict was faulty – there is an offence of cowardice in the face of the enemy and not every desertion is justified by circumstance or medical condition. Yet there are two good reasons for a pardon, one specific to the First World War, one more general. There is something special about the place of that conflict in our culture and collective memory. Lately the revisionists have been making progress among professional historians. Scholars are now saying the British Army in France and Flanders were not lions led by donkeys, but lions led by lions; that many general officers (who suffered and died, too) were heroes and talented military tacticians. No one less, Joan Littlewood has the best tunes, still. The war is remembered as a conflict based on class, an episode in which ordinary people were sent to their death in hecatombs because this was not, in the way the Second World War was, a democratic and popular conflict. A general pardon would recognise the way this war continues to be perceived and go some way to pacifying the still lively sense that it was an especially horrible war.

A pardon would not imply that the officers involved in sentencing soldiers to death were evil men or even that the decisions they made in military courts were "wrong". We must all be relativists, to the extent that we recognise people behave in the circumstances they are given, or are allowed to make. But we are only relative relativists. We have to believe there are universal standards of right conduct which exist outside of time, for without such a scale we lack the means to adjudicate that unique event, the Holocaust.

Besides we are not relativist about our own moral climate. To pardon those men shot in the 1914-1918 War would answer a contemporary perception about government. If Labour ministers cared only for their own skins, they would realise refusing a pardon is a passport to unpopularity. They should, however, reflect on the broader case for sticking to their earlier support. Their potency as an administration depends on people seeing government as a set of fair procedures, which are able to correct themselves when mistakes are made. That includes mistakes made over the killing of a black youngster on the streets of London. And it includes mistakes made eighty years ago.

Remedies for credulity

TWO OF the most abused words in the contemporary vocabulary are "natural" and "holistic". When they are coupled with "therapy" blue lights flash and sirens sound. Thus all those rational souls who have always harboured doubts about "alternative" therapies will take malicious comfort from the report today that acupuncturists do not always seem to know where they are putting their needles. To be pierced by a non-sterile needle is one thing. But it is quite another kettle of carp to find that some acupuncturists have been sticking their needles into vital organs, such as the heart, lung and spine. Many of us are sceptically tolerant. We note that Prince Charles, the enthusiast for alternatives, resorts to a person in a white coat with medical degrees when he falls off his polo pony. Alternative medicine is fine as long as it does no actual harm; if it causes headache and nausea without inducing fits or heart failure, well and good. But doubts begin when practitioners of cult therapies start putting people in hospital as a result of their "cures". Once we were perhaps over-credulous about the power of conventional medicine – never questioning the lofty doctors, simply assuming that the drugs would work. Now, however, we may be becoming too credulous about the alternatives. A healthy mind is suspicious of all complete systems.



Evening in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica: a boy runs home through the hills

Photograph: Tom Pilsdon

A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171 293 2534

Hospital mergers

YOUR REPORT on the increasing number of hospital mergers (11 March) did not touch on the two most vital issues.

The prime reason given by the Royal College of Surgeons and the BMA for merging so as to obtain catchment populations of upwards of 500,000 is that otherwise it is not possible to provide continuous consultant cover, and thus safe emergency services, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. It is better – measured in terms of survival – for patients with life-threatening conditions to be transported a few more miles into the hands of top-class experts than to have the convenience of proximity, but thinly spread skills.

The second issue is that the very technological developments that make it vital to centralise emergency care also allow the great majority of non-emergency cases to be treated away from the central hospital. Rather than closing local hospitals, they can be developed in a new role to include specialist outpatient clinics, minor casualty units, radiology and physiotherapy departments, maternity units for normal births and facilities to deal with the elective surgical work which makes up waiting lists.

So rather than most patients having to travel farther (except for emergency care of life-threatening conditions) locality hospitals can bring most of the functions for which most people have to go to hospital much closer to where they live.

Dr RONNIE POLLOCK
MPA Health Strategy and Planning
London NW1

THE SECRETARY of State for Health and the East Kent Health Authority appear bent on closing Kent and Canterbury Hospital. All the major treatments will be passed to hospitals in Margate and Ashford, leaving a cottage hospital here for nosebleeds and minor cases of gout. This proposal has come after the traditional heart-searching and, of course, bean-counting and is the only logical course.

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

It is perfectly simple: you just have to imagine that Canterbury was not there and you were going to build it.

"Let's have a city of at least 40,000 people, and about another 100,000 just outside, with a big tourist attraction in the middle; say, two million visitors a year. We'd better have a university – everyone else has got one – so put 20,000 kids up there. Stick all the well-known stores in the High Street and a couple of supermarkets on the fringe. We'll need a railway station – make that two – a bus station and a coach park. Fire brigade here, police there. Dot some industry around, some churches and a few schools and that should do it."

"What about a hospital?"
"Oh, stick that fifteen miles away."
COLIN STANDFIELD
Canterbury, Kent

After the hunt Bill

SO THE Bill to end hunting with dogs has been lost.

The majority of the nation wanted it to succeed. The majority of country people wanted it to succeed. The overwhelming majority of the House of Commons voted for it to succeed. But the Government didn't want it.

An indirectly elected government chosen by an indirectly elected prime minister appointed by a non-elected Head of State allowed our antiquated legislative procedures to frustrate the will of the people and their elected representatives. And *The Independent* defends this (leading article, 14 March).

What do we say to the many people who have worked for so long and so hard to achieve an end to this cruel activity? What do we say to those who want to take "direct action"?
M J FARRELL
Ongar, Essex

THE LOGIC of your leading article "Drop the humbug about hunting" (14 March) was exemplary – until your discussion of the banning of activities for moral reasons.

You cited adultery and abortion as practices regarded as wrong by many people where you clearly considered legislation to be inappropriate. Would you say the same about paedophilia, rape, or murder?

Obviously it is a question of where to draw the line. The vast majority in this country want a line to be drawn against torturing a wild animal for fun: you do not. Your attitude is as contemptible as the duplicitous response of the Government on this issue.
STAN ROSENTHAL
Lynfield, West Sussex

WHY DO so many MP and others say that foxes need culling? When we farmed 86 acres in Devon where there were plenty of rabbits and other fox food, there was no increase in fox numbers in eleven years. Nor did we lose any of our 500 free-range poultry, who were able to roam anywhere on the farm.

We had a fox earth and a badger sett on the farm. We did not interfere with our foxes. We understood wildlife and took every precaution, not allowing hens to nest in hedges and always shut up houses at night. It is useless for gamekeepers to shoot, snare and poison every fox on their estates, when other foxes will soon replace them from outside. Two keepers I knew had a more sensible solution: if a vixen was seen taking rabbits and other "fur" to her cubs, she was saved. But if a vixen was taking "feather" to feed her cubs they were all destroyed to prevent these cubs killing birds when adult. In time these keepers would have fewer

foxes to kill, and rabbits, hils and mice would be kept down by the resident foxes. It is the great advantage of the game birds.

ERIC ASHBY
Ringwood, Hampshire
YOUR leading article of 14 March states that "practices such as the 'blooded' of children are little short of barbaric". Little short?
MARK RASMUSSEN
London E11

WHATEVER we may think of fox and deer hunting, Mozart and Beethoven and the musical world owe the pursuit of animals on horseback an incalculable debt. Without mounted huntsmen the helical horn (*cor de chasse*) would not have evolved.

The helical horn was slung in double-coil, from left shoulder to right side. The huntsman's girth determined the length (and therefore pitch). Longest was 14ft (in D) and lesser boops 13ft and 12ft (in Eflat and F). The multiple harmonies of these long tubes encouraged duet playing: the forests rang – and composers listened. The 18th century found experimenters with a tunnelled mouthpiece and held-in-bell technique transforming the open-air stridency of the *cor de chasse* into the French Horn of drawing-room delight.

Mozart recognised the potential and wrote horn parts into all of his orchestral works. Beethoven followed, deeply involving horns in all his symphonies.

We might ask what has become of the relatively musical *cor de chasse*? Today's obviously unmusical huntmen seem content with their short two-note easy-to-play screech: "thing. Grounds for banning?"
FARQUHARSON COUSINS
Harrow, Middlesex

Don't shun Turkey

THE estrangement between the European Union and Turkey is terribly dangerous, seeming to convey the message that religious difference matters more than secular institutions (leading article, 13 March). The Kurdish problem should not be made an insuperable obstacle. After all, France was a founder member of the EEC despite her war in Algeria.

In a wider context, Turkey is the main barrier to the coalescence of a potential sectarian war-frost stretching from Bosnia to Basra and beyond: by way of Palestine. For all our sakes, the Turks should be rewarded for eight decades of secular government.
P J STEWART
Oxford

No Teletubbies here

INSTEAD of this endless discussion on the comparative merits of different television programmes and their effects on our children, why not compare television with real life.

I have a two-year-old boy and no television. Gasp! I spend my time with my son walking, visiting friends, museums, farms and toddler gyms, playing with trains, Duplo, "soft stuff" (wonderful invention), his of cardboard, paper and loo rolls, drawing, reading, singing silly songs, cuddling and generally living.

He is a bright, articulate, happy, sociable little boy who as far as I am aware doesn't miss television: what could he honestly be missing?
JUDITH C WOODHOUSE
Penarth, South Glamorgan

Portia's prejudice

TONY RIDGE is wrong about *The Merchant of Venice* (letter, 16 March). It is not the heroine who is made to fancy "the noble Ethiopian" (actually he is Moroccan), but the audience. Portia's attitude is best summed up in her two gibes to Nerissa about the Prince's complexion: proving that even a multi-million-aire can come cheap.
JAMES LOADER
Orpington, Kent

Where agony aunts turn when it all gets too much for them



MILES KINGTON

WHEN YOU have an emotional problem, you can always write to an agony aunt – but who do agony aunts turn to with THEIR problems? To Auntie Agony, that's who! The only agony aunt who deals exclusively with the problems and troubles peculiar to agony aunts! And she's back again today with another postbag of problems sent in by the country's agony aunts! Right, that's enough exclamation marks, so on to the emotional minefield with Auntie Agony, and the first problem please...

Dear Auntie Agony, You really must help, as I am feeling almost suicidal. I have been running a problem corner for a major group of provincial newspapers for several years now, and the pressure must be getting to me because I find myself subject to the most extreme mood swings. One week I might be bubbly and extrovert, almost manically so, and the next week I could easily be just as caught in a deep depression. This

has obviously affected my work, as the solutions I offer to people's problems tend to vary wildly according to my mood.

For instance, if some woman writes in to say that that her marriage seems to have stagnated and she thinks her husband may be having an affair, I might, if I am in my cheerful mode, encourage her to go out and have an affair herself, to live a little! But if I am on the downward curve, I might tell her that things aren't going to get any better, that we are sent into this world to suffer and that she might as well stick with a stagnating marriage as anything else.

In other words, I will give two completely opposite pieces of advice depending on my mood swing, and they can't both be right, can they? Well, I suppose they both could be right, depending on the people involved – after all, you never really know enough about people to give them the right advice, do you? Actually, I think I'm making a bit of a fuss about nothing. Can't really think

why I bothered you. Having written this letter and talked it through has made me feel a whole heap better. Thanks, Auntie! You've done it again!
Auntie Agony writes: Not at all. Thank you for showing us your lovely mood swing. And the next...

Dear Auntie Agony, I run a problem corner for a national newspaper which I would rather not mention the name of, and although I am a man, I have always written under a woman's assumed name. I am sure you can guess the reasons for this. People always assume that women handle emotional problems better, and are more sensible when it comes to sorting out life (though if that were true, all psychiatrists would be women and male psychiatrists would be distressed!) and I certainly feel when I get down to problem-handling that thinking my way into my chosen female character helps me to find a solution.

The female role I adopt is rather warmer

and softer than the real me, but the trouble is I have begun to feel rather attracted to this woman as whom I masquerade, and am very tempted to start an attachment with her. Am I being very foolish?

Auntie Agony writes: Let me get this straight. Are you falling in love with yourself? And wondering if you should have an affair with yourself?

Dear Auntie Agony, Yes.
Auntie Agony writes: Hmmmmmm... Which one of you is writing this?

Dear Auntie Agony, The man.
Auntie Agony writes: Leave her alone, you beast! How dare you take advantage of her? Hands off! And the next...

more interesting than the real ones I am sent, which I always throw away. Is this very wrong?

Auntie Agony writes: You're making this up, aren't you?

Dear Auntie Agony, Yes.

Auntie Agony writes: And the next!

Dear Auntie Agony, Almost all papers have an astrology column. Almost all papers have an agony aunt. The astrologer claims that human problems are tied to birth signs. The agony aunts assume that human problems are tied to character. They can't both be right, can they? And yet we take both on trust, and believe both of them! Isn't this just a bit mad?

Auntie Agony writes: What sign are you?

Dear Auntie Agony, I am Scorpio.

Auntie Agony writes: Typical!
Auntie Agony will be back again soon. Keep these letters rolling in! Or we'll have to make them up!

[illegible]

Replacement cost profit before exceptional items rose by 13 per cent to £2,822bn, return on capital employed reached 17 per cent and BP's debt ratio fell to 23 per cent half its level four years ago.

Canada (\$)	2,2958	Netherlands (guilders)	0.8538
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8560	Norway (kroner)	3.3492
Denmark (kroner)	11.29	Portugal (escudos)	12.32
Finland (markka)	8.9923	Spain (pesetas)	298.93
France (francs)	9.8565	South Africa (rand)	246.53
Germany (marks)	2.9531	Sweden (kroner)	12.91
Greece (drachma)	524.42	Switzerland (francs)	2.3994
Hong Kong (\$)	12.52	Turkey (lira)	378.44
Ireland (pounds)	1.1699	USA (\$)	1.6387

Source: Thomas Cook

صبرنا من الاعمى



OUTLOOK ON THE NEW CODE, FOR FISCAL STABILITY, OWNERSHIP OF THE BBC, AND EMERSON'S BATTLE WITH MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS

Brown's hair shirt will not suit all occasions

One of the great spectator sports for observers of Ken Clarke's Budgets was guessing how many years he would put off his promise of a balanced budget. It turned out that the Clarkian "medium term", when spending and revenues would balance, was a rolling concept. It was always four years from the instant he stood up in the House of Commons, whisky in hand, to set out his latest plans.

In contrast to this "virtue later" approach, Gordon Brown trumpets austerity now. What's more, he is going to make sure every future chancellor follows the same path of righteousness. The Code for Fiscal Stability will legislate for prudent Budgets forever. Each chancellor will be able to choose his own particular rules, whether that means keeping borrowing within the level of public investment (Mr Brown's "golden rule") or the "three" preferred goal of government spending shrinking as a share of the economy. But they will all have to have a rule, publish it, and show how well they are matching up to it.

The new code is meant to do for fiscal policy what Bank of England independence has done for monetary policy. The intention is to subject the government's tax and spending plans to unprecedented scrutiny.

It's hard to quarrel with this ambition. But what will the new code achieve in practice? Would it, for that matter, have changed the Ken Clarke approach? The answer has to be perhaps not necessarily. Extra scrutiny of a mass of Treasury documents by parliament and the

National Audit Office would have made it a bit more embarrassing for him to postpone his target year after year. It would also have made pre-election tax cuts, like those introduced before the 1992 election, far more transparent and therefore less worth gambling on.

But what a stability code can never do is prevent the kind of economic shocks that overturn the most prudent plans. Recessions will always send government borrowing soaring. Nor can any code ensure that the Treasury's forecasts for the economy and borrowing turn out to be correct.

In the end the Brown proposal amounts to little more than window dressing. No Chancellor ever wants to run an irresponsible policy, even if some of them have been easily tempted into it when there's an election to win. These days the capital markets tend to keep governments on the straight and narrow far better than any rule is ever capable of doing. Furthermore, what seems right for today can often seem wholly inappropriate tomorrow. Government's always need to leave room for some flexibility. Even so, the code shows good intentions and is therefore generally to be welcomed.

Leave Auntie just as she is

Nobody doubts the size of the management task facing John Birt, director general of the BBC. In some respects the BBC's licence fee is every chief executive's dream

- a guaranteed source of income into the indefinite future. Unfortunately this unique, hypothecated tax is not all upside. The fixed licence fee means there is limited scope for growing revenue, which in turn necessitates spreading a fixed pool of money more and more thinly in the fight for audience. Furthermore, from this year onwards the Beeb will be spending a tenth of its revenue annually on the conversion to digital. That means less money for programming, less money for touting increasingly fierce competition.

All the same, it is not clear that making the BBC into an institution mutually owned by licence fee payers - as suggested in a new booklet by the Institute for Public Policy Research, a left leaning think tank - would solve the problem. There would be some potential advantages, obviously. Removing the BBC from public ownership would allow the BBC to raise debt without affecting the level of public sector borrowing or going the whole hog of privatisation, though for what purpose the IPPR doesn't say. And mutual ownership might make licence-fee payers feel more attached to the BBC as well as making the BBC more answerable to its viewers.

But in the end the proposal suffers from a fundamental flaw - you cannot privatise a tax without allowing people the right to opt out of it. The virtue of the present licence fee system - which is unique to Britain - is its attributes as a flat rate tax, affordable to all, capable of funding a basic level of quality, public service broadcasting. The moment the BBC

is removed from the public sector, a sizeable minority, possibly swelling over time to a majority, is going to start wondering why they should be paying a licence fee at all when they spend their lives watching Sky, down the gym or loitering on street corners.

Furthermore, it is questionable that we actually want the BBC independently tapping the capital markets for extra sources of income. The BBC is already a monopoly broadcaster in the UK with nearly a half of the total TV and radio market. That's enough for any organisation, even one producing such lasting monuments of our age as *Teletubbies* and *Eastenders*. Nothing would be gained by attempting to make it more dominant still. The BBC is perfectly all right as it is, thanks very much.

Pyrrhic victory for Astec institutions

At first glance, Emerson Electric's decision to allow its subsidiary Astec (BSR) to pay a final dividend is a victory for institutional shareholders. Two months ago Emerson threatened any minority shareholder in Astec who did not accept the US behemoth's offer of 111p a share with a complete suspension of dividends. Now it's performed a U-turn and even proposed that one of the directors it voted off the board a week ago be allowed back on. Has all the criticism heaped on Emerson and its blue-blooded advisers finally made them blush?

Er, not really. In fact, Emerson's move rather neatly undermines the court case that aggrieved institutional shareholders have brought against it. The institutions argue that suspending the dividend unfairly prejudices the rights of minority shareholders and the Companies Act forbids that. But Emerson has paid a dividend. Ergo, the institutions' case is groundless.

Whether this particular ruse fools a High Court judge remains to be seen. In the meantime, however, Emerson is showing no signs of softening its hard-pressed stance. It has pulled out of talks with Astec's independent directors after the two sides failed to agree a price. Given that Emerson was apparently willing to increase its offer by a whole 7p a share, that's hardly surprising. The Emerson appointees on Astec's board have also banned the four independent directors from speaking to anyone without their permission. Hardly the behaviour of a corporation that has seen the error of its ways.

So the law is now the institutions' only hope, and a fairly flimsy one at that. But whatever the outcome of the case, it's clear that the "Takeover Code" needs changing. The current rules are designed to prevent a bidder from getting above 30 per cent without making a full offer. The rules should require any company wishing to breach the 50 per cent threshold to make a full offer at the same price as it is buying shares. That would have required Emerson to make a bid at 153p when it raised its stake last March above 50 per cent. What the institutions would give for that price now.

Emerson changes tactics in battle with Astec investors

By Peter Thal Larson

EMERSON Electric, the US giant which is battling to take full control of Astec (BSR), the electronic components group, yesterday changed its stance on Astec's dividend and board in an attempt to improve its chances of winning the long-running battle with Astec's minority shareholders.

Meanwhile, Emerson also revealed that talks with Astec's independent directors about securing their recommendation for an offer had broken down. Emerson and its advisers are understood to have been willing to offer about 118p per share, compared to an earlier indicative offer of 111p. How-

ever, Astec's independent directors had held out for more. "These discussions have now been terminated," Emerson said yesterday. The news pushed Astec shares down 4p to 117p.

In a statement, Astec's board, which is now controlled by Emerson nominees, said it had decided to pay a final dividend. Emerson had previously threatened the company's minority shareholders that it was considering cutting the dividend completely.

Astec's final dividend has been revised from 1.41p to 1.25p, making a total dividend of 1.94p. This is still an increase of 7.8 per cent over 1996.

Last night, City experts said

the move was a clear attempt by Emerson to undermine the court case that institutional shareholders in Astec have started against the US company. The institutions have argued that Emerson's threat to cut the dividend unfairly prejudices their interests. They also allege that a director nominated by Emerson forced the company to report a lower interim profit figure last August.

Emerson said it rejected the allegations and that it was seeking to have the petition dismissed. The company yesterday applied to the High Court to strike out the proceedings.

In a further development,

Astec announced that it would ask for Neal Stewart, the group's technical director who was one of the company's founders, to be reinstated to the board at the company's annual general meeting. Mr Stewart was one of Astec's three executive directors who was voted off the board by Emerson at an extraordinary general meeting last week.

A spokesman for Emerson said that Astec had a list of 10 directors, requiring it to replace three directors with its own appointees to get a majority. Now that it had a majority, it would seek to increase the number of board members, allowing it to bring back Mr Stewart.

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Jakarta 'cabinet from hell' ponders IMF terms

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong

MIXED SIGNALS emerged from the controversial new Indonesian ministers as they were sworn into office yesterday - dubbed the "cabinet from hell" - while the international community waited for signs Jakarta might take a more conciliatory attitude on implementing economic and financial reform.

Jusuf Habibie, the new vice-president, told visiting Tokyo officials that his country could implement all but two provisions in a 50-point programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a \$43bn (£26bn) bail-out.

President Suharto said last week that many of the IMF's conditions ran contrary to the country's constitution and therefore could not be implemented. Mr Habibie was yesterday reported as saying that 40 of the reforms could be implemented soon and eight others could be adopted after some revision. But he stated that monopolies on the spice trade and on agricultural products other than rice could not be scrapped.

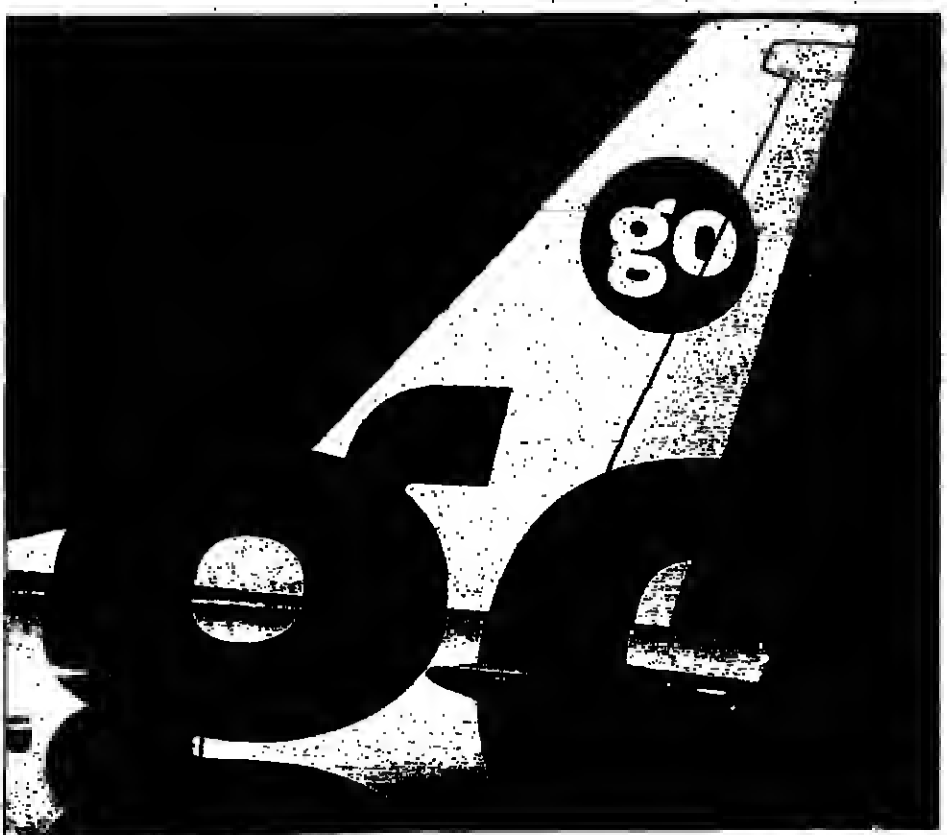
But Mohamed "Bob" Hasan, the new trade and industry minister, and close business associate of the Suharto family, who holds the lucrative timber trade monopoly, said such monopolies sometimes served the public

interest. The IMF sees market liberalisation as a key aspect of economic reform. "Some monopolies help the people," he said, without being more specific. Speaking yesterday in Hong Kong, Adam Schwarz, an Indonesia expert at the US-based Council on Foreign Relations, said bluntly that "the Indonesian economy is not on the brink of collapse, it is already collapsing".

He cited the mounting pressures of inflation, now in the range of 200-300 per cent, the virtual cessation of imports because of the lack of foreign banks prepared to accept Indonesian letters of credit and the breakdown of the internal distribution system.

Mr Schwarz said that the corporate sector was "functionally bankrupt" and would even be so if the local currency appreciated in value by 50 per cent. Moreover there was even worse news to come because corporate debt accounted for around 80 per cent of Indonesia's foreign debt. Most of this debt had been owed by short-term borrowings which will mature next month and in May, triggering yet another liquidity crunch and possible defaults.

While economic problems were multiplying Mr Schwarz sensed a "large gap between how the outside world and the Indonesian leadership perceives the crisis".



Union officials are furious that BA has provoked a bitter recruitment battle

Go 'beauty contest' triggers chaos among airline unions

By Barrie Clement Labour Editor

GO, the cut-price offshoot of British Airways expected to start services in May, is facing a chaotic scramble for members among competing unions after a split emerged between the main labour organisations.

Some unions yesterday declared their readiness to enter a "beauty contest" arranged by the company to see who should represent employees, while others have refused to have anything to do with it on principle.

The deep difference of opinion means that while one union may be selected by management to represent staff, others will be actively recruiting employees in order to undermine the whole industrial relations system.

The Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union and the MSF white collar union have decided to make presentations to management in an attempt to be chosen as the single union to represent staff, but the Transport & General and the GMB general union are bitterly opposed to the arrangement. The latter argue that employees should choose which organisations they want to represent them, not employers. An MSF source said that his organisation would rather participate in a beauty contest than allow Go to become a non-union company.

Management wants the successful union to acquiesce over a three-year pay freeze and to agree to a system in which up to one-third of employees' remuneration is made up of per-

formance-related pay. Union officials also point out that rates of pay at Go will be 20-30 per cent below those at the parent company BA.

Sean Keating, a national official at the GMB, has already launched a campaign to recruit Go staff together with non-union members at competing cut-price airlines. Debonair, Ryanair and easyJet. He said he was "disappointed" that sister unions had decided to participate in the process. "When we recruit members at Go, it will be irrespective of any agreement reached by management with another union," he said.

George Ryde, national officer at the T&G, pointed out that his union were the largest in the industry and would be seeking members at the new airline.

Brown lays down law on fiscal prudence

By Diane Coyle Economics Editor

GORDON BROWN polished his Iron Chancellor image yesterday by announcing that governments will in future be required by law to run a prudent fiscal policy.

Confirmation of his intention to introduce a Code for Fiscal Stability came a day ahead of a Budget expected to be tough on spending and borrowing. Although the government's finances are in better shape than he predicted as recently as November, the Chancellor has made it plain he will not ease his tax and spending plans.

The new code will subject levels of tax and expenditure to stricter parliamentary and public scrutiny. It is intended to mirror the transparency in interest rate policy resulting from the Bank of England's independence since last May.

The Chancellor is determined to prevent the British economy from reverting to its old pattern of boom and bust. His proposals got a guarded welcome yesterday.

Kevin Darlington at ABN Amro said: "It does open up fiscal policy to much greater scrutiny." Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said firm rules would be helpful, but added: "It is only a way of dressing up what is already accepted practice."

Mr Brown has indicated that if there is leeway for any increase in spending, he will make sure this takes place in the second half of Labour's term of office. But he is determined to refute allegations he is being tough on spending now simply to build up a pre-election "war chest".

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Gallaher allegations hit UK tobacco firms

By Andrew Yates

MORE THAN £186m was wiped off the value of the two biggest British tobacco groups yesterday after allegations emerged over the weekend that Gallaher, supplier of brands such as Benson & Hedges and Silk Cut, knew smoking caused cancer almost 30 years ago.

Shares in Gallaher fell 19p to 335p and Imperial Tobacco's stock gave up 10.5p to 401.5p amid fears that the documents would increase the chance of successful litigation against the two tobacco giants.

Anti-smoking campaigners claimed an internal confidential memo from Gallaher's former general manager of research to its managing director proved the group knew smoking caused cancer as far back as 1970. The research executive concluded that independent research using beagles in the late 1960s "proves beyond all reasonable doubt the causation of lung cancer by smoke" and that the research "would appear to

remove the controversy regarding the causation of the majority of human lung cancer."

Leigh Day, the solicitors representing 52 lung cancer victims in their bid for compensation from Gallaher and Imperial, said yesterday the new evidence significantly raised the chances of mounting a successful legal claim against the industry. "The tobacco companies have always maintained that there is no proven link between smoking and cancer. This blows their defence out of the window," said a spokeswoman for the firm.

"This is only one of many documents that will surface over the next few months that will strengthen our case," she added. Gallaher hit back at the claims, saying the memo had simply been an initial reaction to the research and that it was later discounted by the company after being heavily criticised in the scientific community.

A Gallaher spokesman said: "Our position is that the link between smoking and cancer has not been proved, although we

agree that smoking is a risk factor and that statistics show that if you smoke you are more likely to get certain diseases."

"We have of course been aware of the existence of this memo and its publication now does nothing to change our confidence in our ability to defend ourselves against litigation," he added.

Clive Bates, director of anti-smoking group Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), said: "This is the great beauty of litigation - their internal documents show what they really knew and how they behaved, and their top executives have to take the stand under oath. Litigation means the truth does actually come out and the PR waffle gets taken to pieces."

The next stage in the UK action by lung cancer victims will take place on 3 April when a judge will be named for the case. The full trial is now expected to take place next year, after the claimants recently won the right to fight on under a no-win, no-fee agreement with their solicitors.



Groupe Chez Gerard, the restaurant company, yesterday served up a leap in first half profits as it hailed London as one of the culinary capitals of the world. The group, which includes Chez Gerard, Livebait, Bertorelli's, Soho Soho and Scotts, saw pre-tax profits surge 34 per cent to £1.76m for the two weeks to 28 December, from £1.31m a year ago. Neville Abraham,

the chairman and chief executive - pictured above outside Livebait, flanked by Laurence Isaacson (left), the marketing director, and Ian Holder, finance director - said the group had carved a niche in the market. "London now has the reputation of one of the gastronomic capitals of the world because of the variety, quality and number of its restaurants." Photograph: PA

Newcastle chiefs under fire as shares slump by £7m

By Andrew Yates

THE STOCK MARKET value of Newcastle United slumped more than £7m yesterday as the City reacted negatively to newspaper allegations that two directors launched an attack on the club's supporters, players and managers.

The shares fell 5 per cent to 85.5p as outraged fans called for the resignation of the chairman Freddy Shepherd and Douglas Hall, son of former chairman Sir John. The club is now valued at £122m compared to £193m when it was floated at 135p last year.

Newcastle has been beset by a series of problems since it

came to the market which has caused its share price to collapse. Mark Corbridge, the group's former joint chief executive, quit the board last year after just seven months with the club. Soon afterwards, Alan Shearer, the club's star £15m striker suffered a long-term injury and plans for a new £90m stadium had to be shelved because of planning problems.

The group's new management team, led by chief executive Freddie Fletcher, had promised to turn around the disappointing performance including plans for a redeveloped 55,000-seater stadium at St James' Park.

Newcastle are now way off the Premiership title chase, have fallen to a disappointing position in the league and the latest revelations come as a crushing blow to the group's credibility in the City.

Newspaper reports suggested that Newcastle sold the striker Andy Cole to Manchester United for £7m despite the fact that he faced the prospect of a career-threatening knee injury. Manchester United's assistant secretary Ken Ramsden rubbished the claims. "The story is nonsense. When we signed Andy Cole we took all the precautions you would be expected to take in a transfer," he said.

Sun Life & Provincial profits leap as merger savings beat expectations

SUN LIFE & Provincial Holdings, the French-controlled insurer formed from the merger of Sun Life and Axa Equity & Law, yesterday unveiled a 54 per cent jump in pre-tax profits in the year of the merger, writes Andrew Verity.

The group, which is the third largest insurer in the UK, also surprised the City by revealing that savings from the merger were 10 per cent higher than it had hoped.

Shares in the company rose 20p to 580p, valuing it at £4.54bn. Earnings per share jumped by half to 26.8p.

Pre-tax profits rose to £337.7m, 54 per cent more than

both groups before the merger. Operating profits, which exclude gains from the sale of its Irish operations, also grew by 14 per cent.

However, the group warned that while its businesses had done well, the value of new business would be difficult to sustain because of competitive market conditions.

Mark Wood, chief executive of Axa, said: "We don't think that our competitors' pricing is sustainable. What we are saying is that we need to get a balance between margin and volume. We are going for margin rather than volume."

Sun Life & Provincial shares closed at 580p, up 20p.

BTR notches up another £650m worth of disposals

BTR, the industrial conglomerate, yesterday took another step towards reinventing itself as a focused engineering group with confirmation that it had made a further round of disposals worth £650m, writes Terry Macalister.

Its Australian building products businesses and Formica Corporation have been bought in cash by venture capital group, CVC Capital Partners. The Australian business was to be floated on the local stock market but BTR changed its mind, worried about the effect of the Asian economic crisis on Australian stocks.

Two weeks ago BTR announced the sale of its pack-

aging business for £2.2bn to Owens-Illinois. Last year BTR sold its polymers division to a venture capital buyer for £151m.

The moves are part of an ongoing divestment programme announced last September. Proceeds are to be used in the previously announced £2bn return of capital to shareholders.

Profit from Monday's sale after goodwill already written off is £30m. After reinstatement of goodwill the loss is £520m.

BTR said it was "making good progress" selling the main remaining business in its divestment programme - namely MBCL, the US metal building components business.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Pearson proves doubters wrong

THOSE WHO questioned Marjorie Scardino's ability when she took over as chief executive of Pearson at the end of 1996 have been proved badly wrong. Under her tenure shares in the information and entertainment conglomerate have gained more than a quarter in value. And that's without resorting to the kind of drastic surgery City opinion felt that Pearson needed when she took the helm.

Ms Scardino has made some smart moves. She's pumped £100m into the *Financial Times* to boost sales in the US and continental Europe, and added to Pearson's television assets by splashing out £250m on All American, maker of *Baywatch* and *The Price Is Right*. However, she's also had to weather a huge false accounting scam at Penguin.

Meanwhile, disposals have been limited. Though welcome, the sale of Mindscape, the disastrous computer games firm which effectively ended previous chief executive Frank Barlow's tenure, was hardly a tough decision. A few minority shareholdings have been sold, while a few more will be disposed of soon.

Despite Ms Scardino's silence yesterday, the for sale sign also appears to have been hoisted over computer magazine publisher Future. But the suggestion yesterday that she might for now be willing to hang on to stakes in the Lazard investment houses, as well as Madame Tussauds, was enough to wipe 16p off the shares, dragging them down to 960p.

A more important question is what Pearson might be thinking of buying. The Simon & Schuster publishing assets, which are currently being auctioned, are clearly on its wish list. In television, meanwhile, experts believe Pearson needs distribution capacity to go with its content, so it may be in the market for minority stakes in television channels in, say, continental Europe.

Will all this be enough to achieve Ms Scardino's aim of producing double-digit earnings growth and doubling the size of the business in five years? That remains to be seen. The 15 per cent increase in operating profits to £323m reported yesterday was a good start, but will be harder to repeat in future years.

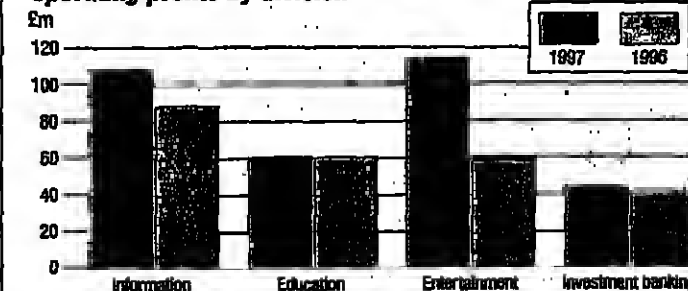
The most important point about Pearson, however, is that without a significant exposure to digital television or new media, its shares rely less on

Pearson: At a glance

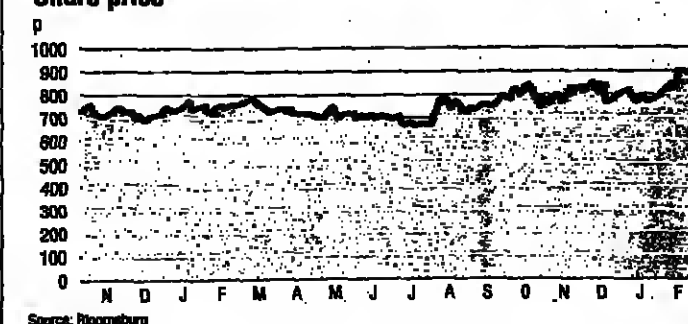
Market value: £15.34bn, share price 950p (-16p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	1.87	1.55	1.83	2.19	2.29
Pre-tax profits (£m)	209	298	365	357	129
Earnings per share (p)	27.00	40.40	47.10	42.90	6.70
Dividends per share (p)	13.00	15.00	16.50	18.00	19.50

Operating profits by division



Share price



Source: Bloomberg

hope that many of its peers in the media sector. Even so, on a multiple of 22 times forecast 1998 earnings, the shares are high enough for now.

Hammerson backs the boom

EVERYBODY in the property industry is wondering just how long the boom will continue. Ron Spinney, Hammerson's chief executive certainly thinks the good times will continue to roll.

Hammerson is putting its money where its mouth is, launching an ambitious expansion programme on the premise that there is still plenty of demand for the right schemes in the right place. It plans to spend £115m out of a total £150m on new UK developments, up from £60m last year. And in

1999 it will plough another £100m into the British property market.

The group is concentrating on central London offices and prime shopping centres. It has just bought Britannia House, a site near London's Old Bailey law courts, and is investing a total of £45m to develop the site.

Hammerson certainly has the financial firepower to fund the investment programme. Gearing has fallen to 58 per cent and net assets per share showed a robust 13 per cent increase to 439p. Net rental income rose from £121.6m to £122.7m in 1997, while there was an underlying increase in the value of Hammerson properties of nearly 8.5 per cent.

Hammerson's shares rose 6p to 508.5p yesterday, but still do not look expensive compared to peers. NatWest Securities puts Hammerson on a current net asset value of 456p which represents an 11 per cent premium compared with a 14 per cent average

for the property sector. That said, concerns remain that the UK property cycle is moving to a mature stage, the economy is slowing down, and developers might be expected to be pulling in their horns rather than looking to expand.

And hopes of a blockbuster property merger appear to have faded. Having failed to entice rival MEPC into a merger, it looks like once bitten, twice shy, and Hammerson has ruled out another deal. Hold.

Bunzl on a roll with fresh focus

WHO SAID the paper and packaging sector was dull? Bunzl is producing the sort of growth that the average go-go pharmaceutical stock would be proud. Its 1997 pre-tax profits rose 11 per cent to £126m, and without the problems caused by the strength of sterling, earnings would have risen by 16 per cent.

Under chairman Anthony Habgood, Bunzl has focused on what it knows best, namely making packaging for supermarkets and supplying plastic caps and plugs. Bunzl has expanded rapidly by buying wisely and its paper operation, traditionally a volatile business, has wisely been slimmed down.

Analysts estimate that Bunzl showed organic growth of 8 per cent last year, no mean feat for a manufacturer and distributor, by picking up share from competitors. This sort of steady growth rate will be difficult to sustain, however it should still be able to expand its existing business by at least 6 per cent a year. And there are plenty of acquisition possibilities, especially in Europe where its chosen markets remain fragmented.

Bunzl is still vulnerable to the vagaries of the paper price but has proved among the best in the industry at coping with its peaks and troughs.

Bunzl's shares have risen by almost 30 per cent over the last few months, helped by a resurgence in the value of second liners as fund managers search for value outside the FTSE 100. And the strong results saw the stock rise another 13.5p to 287p yesterday.

Pennmore Gordon has upgraded current-year profit forecasts by £7m to £133m, and by £5m to £145m in 1999, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 15, falling to 14. Bunzl is still sitting on an undeserved 20 per cent discount to the market, even after its recent re-rating. Good value.

Brussels gives go-ahead to Coopers-PW merger

THE PROPOSED \$13bn (£7.9bn) merger between accountancy firms Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse moved a stage closer yesterday, when the European Commission confirmed it would not issue a statement of objections. The move, which follows last week's approval of the deal by the US Justice Department, is expected to be followed by formal clearance in about six weeks. It is thought that progress was eased after KPMG and Ernst & Young's rival plan was abandoned earlier this year. But both Coopers and PW denied reports that they had made concessions in order to secure approval. "The deal on the table now is exactly the same as we proposed in September," said a spokesman.

Scardino growth pledge

MARJORIE Scardino, chief executive of Pearson, renewed her pledge to deliver double-digit earnings growth yesterday as the media group reported record annual profits. Pearson, owner of the *Financial Times* newspaper, Madame Tussauds waxworks and TV soap *Baywatch*, made pre-tax pre-exceptional profits of £285.9m in 1997, up from £251.8m a year earlier. Ms Scardino said she planned to focus on Pearson's main businesses - business information, educational publishing and TV and entertainment - while selling non-core assets such as stakes in BSKYB and Flextech.

Pensions sell equities

UK PENSION funds made their highest ever quarterly divestment from domestic equities in the final quarter of last year, selling £7bn worth, according to official figures. This was the ninth consecutive quarter of net sales. Although share buybacks were part of the explanation for the scale of the move at the end of last year, maturing pension funds are switching more heavily into gilts and overseas government bonds. They were also net sellers of overseas equities.

Smiths Industries sale

SMITHS Industries is selling its Graseby product-monitoring and environmental divisions to Thermo Electron Corp for a total of £44m. The consideration includes repayment of inter-company debt. The divisions were formerly part of Graseby plc, acquired by Smiths Industries towards the end of 1997. The proceeds from the sale will be used to reduce debt.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Anglo Pacific (F)	4.02m (2.20m)	2.34m (4.40m)	2.40p (0.04p)	nil
ASW Holdings (F)	464.8m (581.8m)	-5.2m (-51.7m)	-6.8p (-61.5p)	nil
Brands (F)	25.4m (21.8m)	2.20m (1.73m)	10.0p (7.1p)	3.25p (2.75p)
CA Group (F)	1.78m (1.74m)	125.9m (113.5m)	17.9p (16.4p)	6.9p (6.3p)
Head (F)	28.71m (15.57m)	0.02m (1.02m)	12.9p (11.6p)	3.6p (3.0p)
Langdon (F)	845.3m (846.2m)	88.6m (4.88m)	2.9p (0.05p)	12.5p (12.5p)
Farley Group (F)	30.7m (24.6m)	52.2m (43.9m)	35.7p (32.3p)	10.0p
File Index (F)	30.3m (34.4m)	1.90m (1.22m)	8.85p (6.02p)	3.7p (3.3p)
Gannett (F)	177.4m (178.4m)	1.40m (0.2m)	2.4p (1.3p)	0.0p
Global Group (F)	130.0m (148.2m)	-1.85m (4.16m)	-0.78p (1.87p)	0.0p
Groupings (F)	78.9m (65.5m)	1.40m (0.71m)	10.56p (5.49p)	3.5p
Groupings (F)	13.30m (8.80m)	1.70m (1.31m)	7.2p (6.1p)	1.15p (1.1p)
Hammer (F)	-	61.7m (70.0m)	15.8p (18.9p)	8.1p (7.8p)
Head (F)	110.4m (62.8m)	4.51m (4.14m)	18.3p (12.8p)	5.75p (5.2p)
Lovell Group (F)	23.2m (23.2m)	4.71m (2.71m)	1.60p (1.35p)	3.9p
Mechanics (F)	178.7m (216.9m)	11.0m (16.5m)	1.50p (2.50p)	4.0p
Metals (F)	101.2m (95.8m)	13.22m (11.52m)	7.20p (6.20p)	4.0p
Perry Group (F)	518.0m (458.0m)	10.00m (8.28m)	25.5p (21.1p)	8.5p (8.0p)
Spencer (F)	265.0m (272.0m)	47.72m (47.11m)	38.3p (38.0p)	15.5p (14.5p)
Sun Life (F)	-	289.8m (124.0m)	27.8p (18.4p)	6.7p
Temple (F)	1.50m (0.99m)	-21.8m (-10.95m)	-85.0p (83.0p)	nil
Warrington (F)	60.19m (57.70m)	2.92m (5.70m)	8.15p (17.0p)	8.30p (8.10p)

(F) - Final (P) - Proforma

Some parts of Europe will be stuck with the wrong interest rates



**HAMISH
McRAE**
ON THE LAST
CHANCE FOR
FINE-TUNING
CURRENCIES

TIDYING UP or a taste of the problems and pressures to come?

You could say that the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) currency realignment at the weekend was simply a bit of fine-tuning ahead of the supposedly irrevocable decision on the currencies of the candidates for Economic and Monetary Union in May. Taken in isolation the realignment was a straightforward bit of common sense. The Greek drachma would have needed to be devalued if it were to become a credible member of the ERM club, given its weak record as a currency over the last couple of decades. So once the decision to join the ERM had been taken, the only way of establishing a central rate which would stick was to give it a bit of margin over the current market view and the 15 per cent devaluation seemed plausible enough.

In the case of the Irish pound, all that was done was to validate the market's view - the new central rate in the ERM, a revaluation of 3 per cent, is much closer to the rate the markets had independently deemed appropriate. It fits in, too, with the need to find some way of checking the booming Irish economy.

Of course in the short term it doesn't actually change anything to change a central rate

within the ERM if the currency is already within the boundaries of the system. But if the market rate were well adrift of the central rate come May, when the euro conversion rates are to be determined, the conversion rate would have had to have been completely different from the central rate, or there would have had to be a devaluation of the Irish pound. Given the boom, that would have been completely inappropriate.

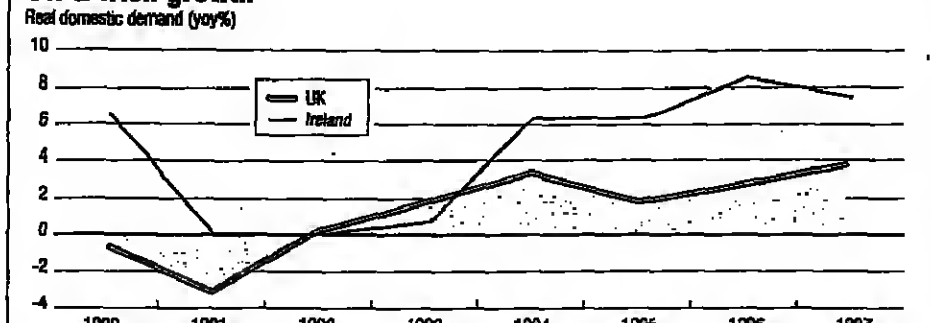
Just how inappropriate you can see from the top graph, which shows how domestic demand in Ireland has been rising at above 6 per cent since 1994 - higher even than Britain, which in turn has been growing faster than France or Germany every year since then. True, there was plenty of slack in the economy then (and there is still slack in the labour market now), but if there had been a devaluation there would have had to have been either an offsetting tightening of fiscal policy or higher interest rates.

The first would have faced obvious political objections, and the latter would have been impossible in the one-size-fits-all European interest rates that are the integral part of the single currency. In practice members of the euro-club will not be able to have different interest rates after May - in fact they cannot really have them now.

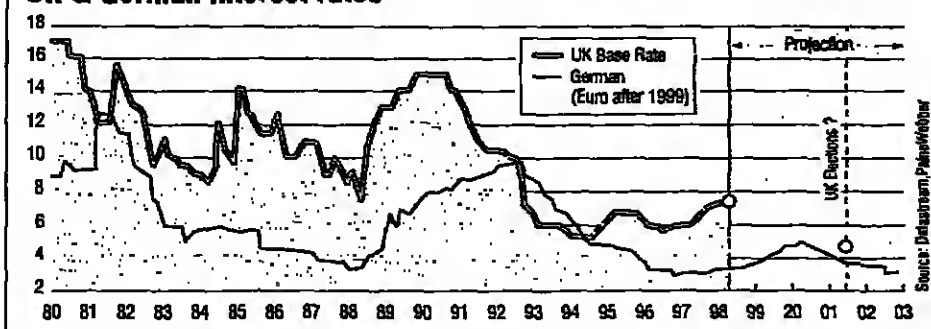
Apply the four-to-one rule of thumb that is sometimes applied to the UK (four percentage points on the effective exchange rate are equivalent to one point on interest rates) to Ireland. The rise in the Irish exchange rate that the markets have imposed and which has now been validated has therefore been equivalent to a 0.75 rise in interest rates - not enough, but a move in the right direction.

But this is the second last time that it is going to be possible to make this sort of adjustment. The final opportunity will come in May - and I would, incidentally, expect another revaluation of the Irish pound then. But once conversion rates are fixed, that is it. Obviously, but astonishingly the policy-makers have only just

UK & Irish growth



UK & German interest rates



started to think about the consequences of this, for it has become completely clear that parts of Europe are going to have a prolonged period during which they will have the "wrong" interest rates. Slightly over-simplifying, the fringe will have rates that are too loose and the core will have rates that are too tight.

Think about it. We know that countries are going to have the wrong interest rates. In what ways will this matter? I suppose the starting point would be to say that we have had situations where countries have had the wrong rates in the past, either because governments (which used to fix short-term interest rates in those not-at-all-distant days when they told central banks what to do) made mistakes.

Here in Britain we had too low rates in 1986 and 1987 (see bottom graph) when we were shadowing the mark; then too high in 1990-91 when sterling was part of the ERM. With hindsight it was pretty stupid to have lower rates in the late 1980s boom than in the early 1990s recession but there you are.

It is also true that you can have wrong rates for different parts of the country and even for different parts of the economy. At the moment we have interest rates that are more-or-less appropriate for the South of England but are too high for the North. We probably have too low rates for parts of the services sector, which is booming, and too high for manufacturing, where output is currently falling.

So even if you do run your own monetary policy you have no guarantee you will get it right. The problem, I suppose is that if someone else runs it (ie the European Central Bank in Frankfurt) you are guaranteed to have the wrong policy at various times. Members of the euro club will find that sometimes monetary policy will be too tight; sometimes too loose. And there will be nothing they can do about it.

The result will be that other policies will have to carry much more of the burden. To some extent economies are self-adjusting: people move to better job opportunities; those who are left

gradually accept lower wages; costs in booming areas rise and start to choke off the excess demand. Expect over the next four or five years the fringes of Europe to boom and the core to decline, an interesting reversal of the trends for most of the European Union's history.

But there are limits to self-adjustment, particularly within Europe where cross-border migration is still quite limited. Much of the burden will in practice fall on fiscal policy - or so it is fashionable among economists to claim.

I have a problem here. I'm not sure that fiscal policy works very well any more. Governments cut taxes but instead of spending the money voters save it, as in Japan. Governments raise taxes, as they have done here, but we bound on regardless. We ran an enormous fiscal deficit in the early 1990s but the recovery did not come till they cut interest rates and let the currency go. The one-size-fits-all monetary policy puts an additional burden on fiscal policy just at the time when it appears to have become much less effective.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



THE FALL-OUT from the "merger" between SBC and UBS continued yesterday with nearly a score of UBS people getting jobs at two rival investment banks.

Pannure Gordon snapped up a dozen UBS staff, mostly equity traders, led by Richard Hine and Colin Grawood. Pannure's head of trading Steven Dalby also recruited two senior institutional salesmen, Gordon Richards and Michael Hoffmann.

On the same day NatWest Securities, the European equities arm of NatWest Markets, hired seven analysts from UBS, including Richard Hamrah and Matthew O'Keefe, who have been ranked number one and number two transport analysts respectively for the past five years. NatWest also hired two analysts and two corporate brokers from other banks.

But the journey for the ex-UBS people won't end there. These individuals recruited by NatWest "will be part of the European cash equities businesses being sold to Bankers Trust", according to the bank. The sale should be completed during the second quarter of this year.

The other UBS refugees are Andrew Beale, who analyses telecoms companies; Ian Turner, who covers the UK electricity sector; Richard Franklin on specialist sales for utilities; and Barry Haddon on media.

NatWest has also hired Christian Stark from UBS in Switzerland to research medium-sized Swiss companies. Lesley Watkins and Nicola Stevens join NatWest in the UK from UBS's corporate HRB side. And finally Tim Owen joins from HSBC James Capel as a food manufacturing analyst, and Marc Duschene recently joined from BZW to work on UK food retail research.

PROPERTY agents Harman Healy are putting an interesting site up for sale in their next auction on 1 April. The 181-acre site in Greenwich, London, contains "a temporary structure currently under construction for use as an exhibition hall."

The firm, quoted in *Estates Gazette* magazine, says possible future uses for the hall include "storage of white elephants, a red

herring pickling plant, a "poppadome" factory or a retirement home for ex-Cabinet ministers." Harman Healy says the property is let to a Mr P Mandelson on a short lease ending in December 2001.

Jonathan Radgick, Harman Healy's auctioneer, says the last time the firm held an auction on 1 April was roughly 10 years ago, when Ronald Reagan was President. "We put the White House in our catalogue, with R Reagan on a regulated tenancy." They got a few requests for more information back then, and Mr Radgick wouldn't be surprised if they got some enquiries about the dome this April.

To mark their last April Fool's Day spoof they baked a huge cake in the shape of the White House and auctioned it off for charity. "Unfortunately the dome isn't very conducive to cakes," said Mr Radgick. "It's the pylons. So this time we've written to the Millennium Dome Experience Company asking for a couple of free guided tours around the dome."

The catalogue entry for the dome site concludes with a caution, a particularly suitable one in the week of the Budget speech: "Purchasers are warned that the register of contaminated land contains records of high levels of natural gases in connection with the site, much of which emanates from the Westminster area."

YESTERDAY'S press conference for Pearson's results kicked off with a corporate video featuring Richard Lambert, editor of the *Financial Times*, appearing as a talking head on several American TV shows. Mr Lambert is of course spearheading the FT's expansion in the US from their offices in New York.

After the video finished, Marjorie Scardino, chief executive of Pearson, wryly remarked that it showed that Pearson had spent £100m "making Richard Lambert a TV star". When a journalist asked whether FT Television would launch another channel in order to capitalise on Mr Lambert's obvious broadcasting talents, Ms Scardino declared: "What a horrible thought."

She then followed up: "No. We can make much more money hiring him out to all the other channels."

SAM JAFFA, senior spokesperson for Price Waterhouse, has had a spot of bother with his book, *Safe as Houses*, a short history of financial scandals published a year ago.

The affable Mr Jaffa admits: "The publishers, Robson Books, told me that the phrase 'safe as houses' doesn't mean anything to Americans. So the paperback version of the book is going to be called *Great Financial Scandals*."

That's more like it. Although you would have thought Mr Jaffa, who spent two years in the US as a BBC correspondent, would have been more au fait with American use of English. "Obviously I didn't spend long enough," admits the ever-modest author.

J SAINSBURY has appointed Sir George Bull, the chairman of Diageo and former group chief executive of Grand Metropolitan, as deputy chairman with effect from April 20.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	D-Mark
UK	10000	0.9988	0.0000
Australia	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Austria	21.373	1.4942	0.0000
Belgium	21.373	1.4942	0.0000
Canada	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Denmark	1.359	0.6006	0.0000
ECU	1.359	0.6006	0.0000
France	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Germany	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Greece	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Hong Kong	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
India	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Japan	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Malaysia	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Mexico	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Netherlands	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
New Zealand	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Norway	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Portugal	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Spain	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Sweden	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
Switzerland	2.4972	0.6006	0.0000
US	1.0000	1.0000	0.0000

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16073	10000
Brazil	16073	10000
China	16073	10000
Czech Rep	16073	10000
Egypt	16073	10000
Ghana	16073	10000
Hungary	16073	10000
Indonesia	16073	10000
Korea	16073	10000
Malaysia	16073	10000
Philippines	16073	10000
Singapore	16073	10000
Thailand	16073	10000
Turkey	16073	10000
USA	16073	10000

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.25%	US	5.50%
France	7.25%	Japan	5.50%
Germany	7.25%	Canada	5.50%
Italy	7.25%	Spain	5.50%
Netherlands	7.25%	Sweden	5.50%
Switzerland	7.25%	Denmark	5.50%
Belgium	7.25%	Finland	5.50%
Australia	7.25%	South Africa	5.50%
New Zealand	7.25%	Portugal	5.50%
Norway	7.25%	Greece	5.50%
Denmark	7.25%	Ireland	5.50%
Finland	7.25%	Spain	5.50%
Sweden	7.25%	Italy	5.50%
Japan	7.25%	France	5.50%
Canada	7.25%	UK	5.50%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	7.25%	US	5.50%
France	7.25%	Japan	5.50%
Germany	7.25%	Canada	5.50%
Italy	7.25%	Spain	5.50%
Netherlands	7.25%	Sweden	5.50%
Switzerland	7.25%	Denmark	5.50%
Belgium	7.25%	Finland	5.50%
Australia	7.25%	South Africa	5.50%
New Zealand	7.25%	Portugal	5.50%
Norway	7.25%	Greece	5.50%
Denmark	7.25%	Ireland	5.50%
Finland	7.25%	Spain	5.50%
Sweden	7.25%	Italy	5.50%
Japan	7.25%	France	5.50%
Canada	7.25%	UK	5.50%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Value	Open Interest
Long GB	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long US	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Euro	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Yen	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Swiss	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Canadian	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Australian	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long New Zealand	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long South African	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Hong Kong	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Singapore	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Thailand	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Malaysia	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Philippines	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Indonesia	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Korea	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Taiwan	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Hong Kong	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Singapore	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Thailand	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Malaysia	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Philippines	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Indonesia	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Korea	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000
Long Taiwan	Jun-98	108.28	108.34	432000	200000

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put	Call	Put
100	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
200	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
300	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
400	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
500	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
600	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
700	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
800	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
900	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34
1000	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34	108.28	108.34

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Price	Commodity	Price
Aluminum	108.28	Steel	108.34
Copper	108.28	Lead	108.34
Gold	108.28	Nickel	108.34
Iron	108.28	Platinum	108.34
Mercury	108.28	Palladium	108.34
Silver	108.28	Vanadium	108.34
Zinc	108.28	Chromium	108.34
Antimony	108.28	Fluorine	108.34
Arsenic	108.28	Hydrogen	108.34
Bismuth	108.28	Neon	108.34
Calcium	108.28	Silicon	108.34
Carbon	108.28	Sulfur	108.34
Chlorine	108.28	Tellurium	108.34
Cobalt	108.28	Thallium	108.34
Cadmium	108.28	Uranium	108.34
Europium	108.28	Vanadium	108.34
Gadolinium	108.28	Yttrium	108.34
Terbium	108.28	Zirconium	108.34
Erbium	108.28	Antimony	108.34
Ytterbium	108.28	Fluorine	108.34
Lanthanum	108.28	Hydrogen	108.34
Cerium	108.28	Neon	108.34
Praseodymium	108.28	Silicon	108.34
Neodymium	108.28	Sulfur	108.34
Promethium	108.28	Tellurium	108.34
Samarium	108.28	Thallium	108.34
Europium	108.28	Uranium	108.34
Gadolinium	108.28	Vanadium	108.34
Terbium	108.28	Yttrium	108.34
Erbium	108.28	Zirconium	108.34
Ytterbium	108.28	Antimony	108.34
Lanthanum	108.28	Fluorine	108.34
Cerium	108.28	Hydrogen	108.34
Praseodymium	108.28	Neon	108.34
Neodymium	108.28	Silicon	108.34
Promethium	108.28	Sulfur	108.34
Samarium	108.28	Tellurium	108.34
Europium	108.28	Thallium	108.34
Gadolinium	108.28	Uranium	108.34
Terbium	108.28	Vanadium	108.34
Erbium	108.28	Yttrium	108.34
Ytterbium	108.28	Zirconium	108.34
Lanthanum	108.28	Antimony	108.34
Cerium	108.28	Fluorine	108.34
Praseodymium	108.28	Hydrogen	108.34
Neodymium	108.28	Neon	108.34
Promethium	108.28	Silicon	108.34
Samarium	108.28	Sulfur	108.34
Europium	108.28	Tellurium	108.34
Gadolinium	108.28	Thallium	108.34

Drugs trial casts shadow on world

In Berlin, former East Germans whose doping skills created a medal machine go on trial this week. Imre Karacs, in Bonn, says the repercussions will be felt far beyond the Federal Republic

THE spotlight is about to fall on the dark secrets of East Germany's phenomenal sporting achievements. Nearly a decade after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the first indictments are ready, and the vanguard of those who relied on drugs to enhance sporting achievement will go on trial in the fortress-like courthouse of Berlin's Moabit district.

Four swimming coaches and two doctors stand accused of inflicting grievous bodily harm on athletes, but this is only the beginning. A team of 60 special prosecutors has spent the past few years sifting through captured files of the Stasi secret police. Their list of suspects currently runs to 680 names.

They are the coaches, doctors, physios and club officials who had turned East Germany into the most prolific medal-winning machine in history. That those unbeatable heptathletes did not get their biopsies just from the weight training was already obvious, but the investigation has revealed far more widespread and systematic doping than was ever suspected. At the latest count, some 2,000 athletes had at one time been on performance-enhancing drugs.

When the trials are over, record books may have to be erased. The prosecutors will try to protect the identities of the victims - the athletes who simply could not lose against their feeble Western opponents. But many will be found out, and their cheating - often unwitting - will reverberate around the world.

However shocking it may seem that the Communist regime had sent an army of doped-up beefcakes into battle

against the decadent West, the real scandal is yet to emerge. For the cadre who stand accused of relying on drugs to make the GDR great were immediately hired by the former enemy, and have been minting gold for their new masters ever since. Most of the 680 remain in employment, in Germany and many other countries of the world.

The first batch, who go on trial tomorrow, had all worked for the swimming section of Dynamo Berlin, the Stasi's very own club. The most prominent of them, Dieter Lindemann, was coaching Franziska van Almsick until very recently. Rolf Glaser, another accused, was working as swimming coach in Austria when he was charged. Volker Rischke also remained in the coaching business in Germany. Only one of the four trainers accused of encouraging the use of drugs, Dieter Krause, has failed to find a job in sport.

The charge sheet names 17 athletes whose health was destroyed by the anabolic steroids they had been forced to take. One teenage girl grew a beard as a result of the "vitamin pills". Another developed a deep voice. The "side-effects" catalogued in the Stasi files include hormonal imbalance, loss of libido, damage to the liver and reproductive organs, mood changes and depression. The investigators have a list of 350 athletes who still suffer from the effects of the enforced medication, and four fatalities.

The Moabit court, which had been grappling with murderous border guards by the Wall and the politicians behind the trigger, has its work cut out. After this case, swimming

sections of 10 other clubs will be processed. Women's swimming was the most methodically drugged East German sport and the most successful.

Most of the athletes involved are dreading their moment of fleeting fame, but some can hardly wait. Rica Reinisch, three-times Olympic swimming gold medalist, is one of the few to publicly denounce their tormentors.

"I was 14 when my coach, Uwe Neumann, first handed over the blue pills," she recalled in a magazine interview last year. "He said: 'Come, little girl, swallow these vitamins. You'll recover better.' Today, the same Mr Neumann works at the Olympic training centre in Leipzig. Hans-Joachim Wenzel, another who is accused of propagating performance-enhancing drugs, also works as a doctor at the Olympic centre in Berlin."

May be not for much longer. These gentlemen are now helping Berlin prosecutors with their inquiries. Cases are also being put together against other perpetrators in different sports. When the court is finished with swimming, it will turn to athletics, followed by rowing, canoeing, weightlifting and cycling.

Did not the East Germans do well in these sports? And are not the unified Germans still performing amazingly well in the same disciplines? Perhaps it is a mere coincidence, but the leading German athletes today tend to have East German coaches, many of whom are on the list of 680. Among the suspects are a former doctor of last year's Tour de France winner, Jan Ullrich. The Olympic champion, Dagmar Hase, is also in dan-



Clean sweep: The former coach of Franziska van Almsick is among those facing doping charges Photograph: Reuters

ger of losing her coach, Bernd Henneberg, who used to train another former swimming star, Kristin Otto.

In women's swimming, it appears it was impossible to stay away from all the drugs. At the World Championships in Perth early this year, the Australian hosts objected to the chief of the German team, Winfried Leopold. Unlike most of his colleagues, Leopold had confessed to have known about

doping, and served a four-year suspension after the fall of the Wall. The German authorities backed him in the dispute with the Australians and won, though mainly because the focus suddenly - and memorably - shifted to the contents of a Chinese suitcase.

The incident, over-the-hill, gave a foretaste of further embarrassment when other trainers manufacturing medals for Germany are eventually un-

masked. For whatever might have been the failings of East Germany, their coaches are reputed to be the best in the world. No German club can afford to shun their services, and many of them are going to extraordinary lengths to protect their new employees.

The Berlin investigators complain of lack of co-operation, not only from the clubs but also from national federations. Questionnaires are not

being returned, inquiries are blocked in high places. Sport, it appears, simply does not want to know what went on in the East, because too many skeletons are rattling in cupboards in the West.

Life would be so much simpler if everyone would forget about the past. The world of sport in Germany is rooting for an uneventful trial in Berlin, but it is likely to be disappointed.

Rise for Rusedski despite defeat

Tennis

DESPITE losing to Chile's Marcelo Rios in the final of the ATP Champions' Cup in Indian Wells, Greg Rusedski, the British No 1, is pleased with his start to the new season.

"It has been a positive start in the season so far. I was just one match from getting into the top three in the world and it puts me into striking distance of the top players."

"I've only a few points behind them so it's a positive thing. If I have a good week I can actually move into the top three."

Although he lost 6-3, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4 on Sunday, Rusedski managed to climb a place, to five, in the rankings, but his British compatriot Tim Henman dropped from 19 to 20.

Henman, who lost in the first round, slipped a place because Austrian Thomas Muster reached the semi-finals of the same tournament. Muster rose from 21 to 17.

Meanwhile Rusedski and Henman will lead the British challenge in the Davis Cup tie against Ukraine in the Euro/African Zone Group One at Newcastle from 3 to 5 April.

David Lloyd, the British captain, has nominated five players - Rusedski, Henman, Andrew Richardson, Neil Broad and Arvind Parmar - from whom the final team of four will be chosen.

Parmar, the 19-year-old Hertfordshire prospect, is likely to stand down but he will have useful experience with the squad.

Lloyd also has to decide whether to play Rusedski and Henman in the doubles as well as the singles. Broad is a doubles specialist but may not be chosen if the tie is close.

Britain met Ukraine in Kiev last July and only won 3-2 after Rusedski and Henman had both lost to Andrei Medvedev.

PHILIPS



Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The league table includes all scores up to February 8th. The player list includes scores from all games played until March 15th. Neither set of scores includes results from the FA Cup. The overall winner at the end of the season will win a pair of tickets to the World Cup finals in France this summer.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point. If a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in The Independent and repeated the following Sunday in the Independent on Sunday.

HOW TO SCORE			
player score	4	clean sheet	4
winning goal	1	successful assist	3
yellow card	-1	red card	-3
manager's team wins	3	draw	1

Independent Fantasy Football

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 15 MARCH

LEAGUE TABLE			
CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 8 MARCH			
POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr D Edmington	Edmo United	294
2	Mr J Hayes	Early Birds	274
3	Mr A Choudh	Niklas Sch. II	272
4	Mr C King	Fighting Victory	270
5	Mr P Tufner	Pin Up 4	270
6	Mr D Evans	Buckham End Old Boys	270
7	Mr D Cox	Southville FC	269
8	Mr D Baker	Dojo Yu	268
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11	Mr D Aston	Billy Boy's 2nd II	268
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40	Mr K Boyle	Billy's Boys	268
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Reformed Parlour wins England reward

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

FACED with the need to break the monotony of a pre-match training camp, many a manager has resorted to taking his players to the cinema. Scotland's Craig Brown memorably did so with "Braveheart".

Should Glenn Hoddle decide to follow suit during England's sojourn at Bisham Abbey next weekend there can be only one choice. "Good Will Hunting". The story of a wayward talent who reforms and flourishes just as it appears he is to waste his life's potential should strike as much a chord with England as Mel Gibson did with the Scots.

Yesterday Hoddle, who relies the Robin Williams role of

guiding mentor, rewarded the latest penitent when he called up Ray Parlour for the 25 March friendly with Switzerland. The Arsenal midfielder is joined by former drinking partner and team-mate Paul Merson who, having played well for the B team last month, is expected to start the Bernie friendly.

Tony Adams is also aboard, but one bad boy turned good (most of the time, anyway) is missing, Paul Gascoigne. This, Hoddle stressed, is because he is injured, not as a result of fresh allegations of assault which the player strenuously denies. Gascoigne, who has completed 90 minutes only once in 1998, spoke to Hoddle yesterday morning and told him that he was still doing only light jogging.

"He was desperate to start playing again, but I told him the important thing was not to come back too early, as he has done in the past, and get another problem," Hoddle said. "I think he was pleased to hear that." Gascoigne has been the subject of recent transfer speculation but Hoddle said he did not mind who he played for as long as he was playing regularly.

Parlour, whose bright performance in the recent B international against Chile was typical of his impressive season, looked an exciting talent when he first broke into the Arsenal team six seasons ago, but the restrictions placed on his game by George Graham and an over-enthusiastic social life hampered his development. Having

featured, with Adams, in the tabloids for a notorious "booze-and-birds" escapade, his lowest point came when he was arrested in Hong Kong for drunkenly assaulting a taxi driver on an end-of-season tour.

However, spurred by the examples of Merson and Adams, and by fatherhood, he has cleaned up his behaviour. This, together with the advent of Arsène Wenger at Highbury, has enabled him to become a key member of the Double-chasing side, with his penetrative running on the right flank balancing Marc Overmars on the Arsenal left.

"A lot of his habits have changed in the last 18 months," Hoddle said. "With his improved fitness he has put on a

yard of pace. He has become a good example to people. There are so many other players, if they got their mind and body right, who knows what they could achieve?"

One who has is Merson - "an amazing story which gives you heart," Hoddle said. "He has put it right, he is a changed person and player and he is getting the rewards. Sometimes you have to reach the bottom before you can rise."

Hoddle pointedly said that Merson's inclusion "showed how important the B match was". As expected, Chris Sutton, who refused to play in that game, has been omitted from both senior and Under-21 squads. Five over-age players can play in the latter match and

they will include Jamie Redknapp as a sweeper.

There is one other uncapped player in the senior party, Kevin Pressman, the Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper. While he is a useful keeper, his inclusion is indicative of the dearth of English No 1s in the Premiership. The only other options for Hoddle were David Watson of Barnsley, Crystal Palace's Kevin Miller, or 40-year-old Steve Ogilvie of Coventry.

The 26-man squad is expected to be significantly reduced by withdrawals, notably from Manchester United, who have seven representatives, following this week's European and FA Cup games.

Switzerland have picked 26 English-based players, Black-

burn's Stéphane Henchoz and Ramon Vega of Tottenham. The first squad picked by new manager Gilbert Gress also includes Stéphane Chapuisat, Ciriaco Sforza and Kubilay Türkyilmaz.

ENGLAND SQUAD (Friendly v Switzerland, Bern, 25 March): Martin (Leeds Utd), Flowers (Blackburn Rovers), Pressman (Sheffield Wed), Southgate (Aston Villa), G. Neville (Man Utd), P. Neville (Man Utd), Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur), Adams (Arsenal), Merson (Arsenal), Hinchcliffe (Sheff Wed), La Sene (Chelsea), P. Farfán (Sheff Wed), Lee (Liverpool), Parlour (Arsenal), Scholes (Man Utd), Beckham (Man Utd), Easty (Newcastle Utd), Cole (Man Utd), Shearer (Newcastle Utd), Duffin (Coventry City), Owen (Liverpool), Merson (Middlesbrough).

Whole new eye-ball game for Collymore

By Phil Shaw

JOHN GREGORY will look into the eyes of his players, searching for signs of trepidation or anticipation, before finalising his side to face Atletico Madrid tonight in the match that will make or break Aston Villa's season.

The scrutiny may be especially intense in the case of Stan Collymore, who scored twice against Liverpool in Gregory's first match as manager, but has not played since suffering a groin injury during Villa's 1-0 defeat by Atletico in the first leg of their Uefa Cup quarter-final.

Collymore declared himself fit yesterday, while Julian Joachim shrugged off a knee injury sustained during Saturday's win over Crystal Palace. Both are vying for a place alongside Dwight Yorke, whose inclusion is assured, and possibly Savo Milosevic, who scored twice against Palace without particularly impressing Gregory.

The likelihood is that Villa will turn to Collymore, perhaps keeping Milosevic in reserve, with Joachim a candidate for a role wide on the right of midfield. But Gregory may well

have had the £7m striker in mind when he said he wanted to be sure that certain individuals were prepared for a potentially explosive contest.

"I shall make eye contact with them at training because you can always read things from doing that," he said. "I'm one for studying carefully every little thing they do, to see whether they are ready for it and whether they've got fear or excitement in their eyes."

A fired-up Collymore can be an awesome prospect for defenders, as Liverpool discovered. That success was one of three in Gregory's first four Premiership games as Brian Little's successor, but he knows it will take an exceptional performance to win by two goals.

"I don't expect us to go for the jugular from the first minute. There has to be a certain amount of caution, though I don't envisage us sitting back and trying to nick one."

Atletico are unbeaten in seven European away matches under Raddy Antic, who is an arch exponent of counter-attacking football. Nevertheless, they arrived in Birmingham under a cloud. Their president, Je-

sus Gil, questioned whether it was worth turning up tonight after Saturday's 2-1 defeat by Compostella. "I am disgusted with them. A lot of the players don't care about wearing the Atletico shirt," Gil said. "We need to go out with the attitude of Aston Villa and fight for the world."

The man charged with keeping emotions under control is Mario van der Ende, the Dutchman who refereed so expertly when England met Italy in Rome last October.

Ten home players and seven from Atletico start the evening knowing a yellow card would put them out of the semi-final first leg, although Villa have received unexpected encouragement in one instance.

Mark Bosnich was cautioned for time-wasting when he sought to draw attention to his bombardment by the crowd in Madrid. Despite the absence of a formal appeals procedure, the Villa secretary, Steve Stride, wrote to Uefa, pointing out the "strange circumstances". The ruling body's disciplinary committee have promised to examine the case on 23 March.



Mark Bosnich: 'I feel I've matured a lot and worked very hard at my game'

Photograph: Brendan Monks

'Potty' Bosnich in the form of his life

FROM turmoil at Aston Villa and trauma with Australia to bat-tricks by Kevin Gallacher, Ronaldo and Romario, Mark Bosnich has taken everything that this season can throw at him and emerged with his reputation enhanced.

Everything, that is, bar the proverbial kitchen sink. And after being pelted with batteries, bottles and lighters during the first leg of Villa's Uefa Cup quarter-final at Atletico Madrid, Bosnich should not be surprised to see a unit hurtling out of the Spanish end at Villa Park tonight.

The way the 26-year-old goalkeeper has been performing, he would probably catch it and bowl it to a colleague. For in spite of hugely disappointing results with club and country, Bosnich is not alone in believing that he has never played so well, so consistently.

Ron Atkinson, the manager who took him to Villa after Manchester United brought him over as a 16-year-old, remarked of his defiance against Atletico that Bosnich "might just be the best keeper in the world" (albeit one who, in the finest traditions of the position, was "a bit potty").

Gordon Strachan said after Coventry's FA Cup win at Villa that one of his many fine saves, a mid-air volley after a deflection suddenly changed the trajectory of a shot, was possibly the greatest he had seen.

Occasia's footballer of the year is embarrassed by such praise, although if self-belief were a crime he would be serving life. "Touching wood, and without wishing to appear conceited, I've been very happy with my form," Bosnich says. "I feel I've matured a lot and worked very hard at my game since I got all the publicity for saving penalties a few years ago."

Amid the missiles in Madrid he was composed, brave and agile by turn. He was eventually beaten by Christian Vieri's blind-guessed penalty, which he chided himself for reaching but not keeping out, and sensed that

Villa's goalkeeper can add to his reputation against Atletico in the Uefa Cup tonight, says Phil Shaw

Raddy Antic's side were content with a 1-0 scoreline. "I think they're confident they can score anywhere in Europe," he says.

The striker who ensured that Atletico went one better was already known to Bosnich. "I trained with Vieri in Sydney when he was 13. His father was a legend in Italy before he came to play in Australia. There was nothing of Christian and a more uncoordinated kid is hard to imagine. Now he's strong, he pulls off defenders' shoulders brilliantly and he's got a good understanding with Kiko. You can see the influence of Juventus' training on him."

Talking of the practice pitch, Bosnich was delighted by the return of the former Villa coach John Gregory as manager, much as he was saddened by the "typically selfish" resignation of Brian Little. "Dwight [Yorke] and I are close, and we often talked about how we missed him after he left for Wycombe," he says.

"He brought something to training that was never really replaced. Now it's as if he never left. The biggest problem has been learning to call him 'Boss'. We got used to 'Grege'."

"In Madrid, he'd been back less than a week but his positivity shone through. The vibes he brought into the dressing-room at half-time made a real difference. It was like the Alamo in the first half, but he very calmly reminded us how much better we'd looked when we kept the ball."

"He told us it wouldn't be possible for Atletico to keep going at the same pace in the second half, and he was right."

Gregory's newly appointed coach, Steve Harrison, also im-

pressed Bosnich with his tactical insights and his jester's touch. In the tense moments before the game he did his John Barnes impersonation. "He had us all in fits. We're still a young team and we thrive on light relief."

Heaven knows Villa needed some. Tipped as possible champions, they were out of everything except Europe and the relegation dogfight by the time Gregory swept in. Criticism of Little, of chairman Doug Ellis and the players, notably Stan Collymore, has been relentless. Bosnich accepts that it goes with the territory - "we're getting paid very good money," he says candidly - and tries to use it as "a positive force."

In between Villa's travails came travels with Australia. His nerveless display in Tehran before 128,000 Iranians gave Terry Venables' Socceros a platform from which to progress to France 98. A lack of what he terms "big-game experience" prevented them from building upon it.

"I know I could still go to maybe two World Cups, but it's really going to hit home this summer because I needed to test myself against guys like Schmeichel, Seaman, Bartzke and Peruzzi. I tasted the tournament atmosphere on a smaller scale in the Confederations Cup in Saudi."

In the final, Australia lost 6-0 to Brazil a week after holding the world champions 0-0, yet Bosnich maintains that he had a better match than in Madrid. "I said to my dad: 'How can I tell people I played well when I let in six?' He said that if I'd played badly it would have been 12."

Villa are going to need positive thinking by the netful tonight, but if all else fails Bosnich may be able to call on a favour from fate. On his way to our meeting, he stopped to help a woman whose car had broken down. "I like to think that if you do some good, it comes back to you," he explains, breaking into a laugh. "Maybe if we end up in a penalty shoot-out..."

Maine line to nowhere for Lee

Manchester City's latest casualty was supposed to be the club's saviour, writes Guy Hodgson

THERE have been many reasons to feel embarrassed to be a Manchester City supporter in recent seasons but the biggest, surely, is that there was once a fans' movement by the name of "Forward With Franny". From the moment Francis Lee became chairman at Maine Road the direction, unerringly, was backwards.

When he announced his resignation yesterday, a little over four years since flight BA254 brought him from Antigua to the City boardroom, Lee said he went with his character intact, which shows how power can delude even as it ebbs to nothing. A man worshipped as a player (112 goals in 249 League appearances) had become the chairman who was openly despised. BA, as in had to awful.

"While I wish Joe Royle well in a task equivalent to nailing jelly to the ceiling," one supporter wrote recently to *The Pink*, Manchester's Saturday sports paper, "he should be on his guard as long as Franny Lee is in charge. City fans are entitled to suggest the problems go much further than poor team spirit. Was Frank Clark ever in charge?" Or Brian Horton, or Steve Coppell, or Alan Ball... the list of managers under Lee was an embarrassment, seven in all. And yet things just got worse. In Peter Swales' last three full seasons, City finished fifth, fifth and ninth in the top division. In Lee's seasons the story was 18th in the Premiership, relegation and 14th in the First Division. Today they are in the relegation places and the new board could soon be trying to extricate themselves from the Second Division.

Lee arrived as a messiah, but one without the means to work miracles as, from the start, the problem appears to have been money. A wealthy man by most standards, he does not have the resources of a Jack Walker and simply could not find the cash or the backers to turn around a poorly managed club with delusions of matching Manchester United. At yesterday's press conference, the new chairman, David Bernstein, said City had been "undercapitalised and overborrowed" for years.

Looking through Lee's pronouncements, they suggest he had no idea of the depth of the problems when he took over in February 1994. Two weeks later he said: "This will be the happiest club in the land. The players will be the best paid and we'll drink plenty of champagne, celebrate and sing until we're hoarse."

He was right about one thing: fans got hoarse shouting abuse. His reign was marked by departing players rather than stability and you could build a fine team round Tony Cotton, Terry Phelan, Keith Curle, Niall Quinn, Garry Flitcroft and Steve Lomas. The replacements, George Kinkladze apart, have not been as good and the club has more than 55 professionals, an indictment of the buying policy.

The indication was that, for all the fine words, City were far deeper in the red than Lee had imagined and he did not have the resources to do anything about it. He had to sell to ease the wage burden.

There was also, as the above letter exposed, a suspicion that Lee tried to manage the team as well as run the club. It was something he vigorously denied, saying the only matter he had an input on was transfers. "There's a lot of money involved these days and it would surprise me if any big clubs depend solely on the manager's opinion."

The quick departure after 33 days of Steve Coppell, who claimed he quit because of a mental breakdown, was never properly explained, however, and supporters have always believed it was because Lee was interfering.

Now he is gone and although Lee is keeping his 11 per cent shareholding in the club, it is unlikely he will be back for some time.

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سكرا من الامم

Fifth Test: Rain denies tourists chance to level the series

England overcome by the elements

By Derek Pringle
in Bridgetown

England 403 & 233-3
West Indies 262 & 112-2
Match drawn

ENGLAND'S chances of winning this Test match and levelling the series were dealt a cruel blow by unseasonal rain in Bridgetown yesterday. Although play eventually got under way after lunch, an episode that saw England dismiss both opening batsmen, further rain led to the match being abandoned as a draw after tea.

Although the outcome was desperately disappointing for those looking forward to an exciting final day's cricket, the arrival of unexpected rain was entirely in keeping with a series whose sundry twists and turns have made it compulsive viewing.

The El Niño effect attracts the blame for most pestilences and plagues around the globe. Now it seems its departure will be equally vilified, at least by England's cricketers and their supporters, who were no doubt confident of a second successive win, at the previously unconquerable bastion of West Indies cricket, the Kensington Oval.

In fact, the draw was probably a foretelling, followed by an England win, even before rain had intervened. By the time it had stopped, however, and the mopping up had been completed, only the possibility of 71 overs to bowl out the West Indies was available to England as

play eventually got under way at 1:01pm.

But if the curious timing pleased those who live by such precision, it nonplussed Clayton Lambert, who after a shaky opening over against Phil Tufnell, proceeded to sky a pull off Angus Fraser, and give England the best possible chance of getting something meaningful out of an already abbreviated day.

Lambert, playing only his second Test since his debut against England six and a half years ago, seems to follow a pattern when he bats. A stocky man, he appears to start off by taking on the howlers with some big shots before tightening up and biding his time. It is a tactic many batsmen use, but with his side third favourites to win here, it was probably ill-advised. Undeterred, however, he tried to launch Fraser's second ball over midwicket. Fortunately for England, it caught the top edge and flew high to wide mid-on, where Dean Headley, no doubt mindful of the sinner he had dropped the

previous day, took a testing catch.

The wicket left Philo Wallace, an even lustier striker than Lambert, caught in two minds. But if he began carefully, he soon opened his shoulders, and he brought up his half-century with a mighty straight six off Tufnell.

Wallace, a riveting and watchable success here on his home ground, has been labelled, by some eminent on-lookers as nothing more than a swifter. It is an unfair assessment and when he needed it, his defensive bat was straight and still. His weakness, and one common to most lusty strikers, is that he plants his front foot down the pitch early in order to get his weight going forward. However, if the ball is not there to hit, as Andy Caddick's nip-hacker later proved when it had him lbw, it leaves him with no option but to retract it back into line with the stumps.

It was the first time in the series, the West Indies openers had been successful. But if the break-

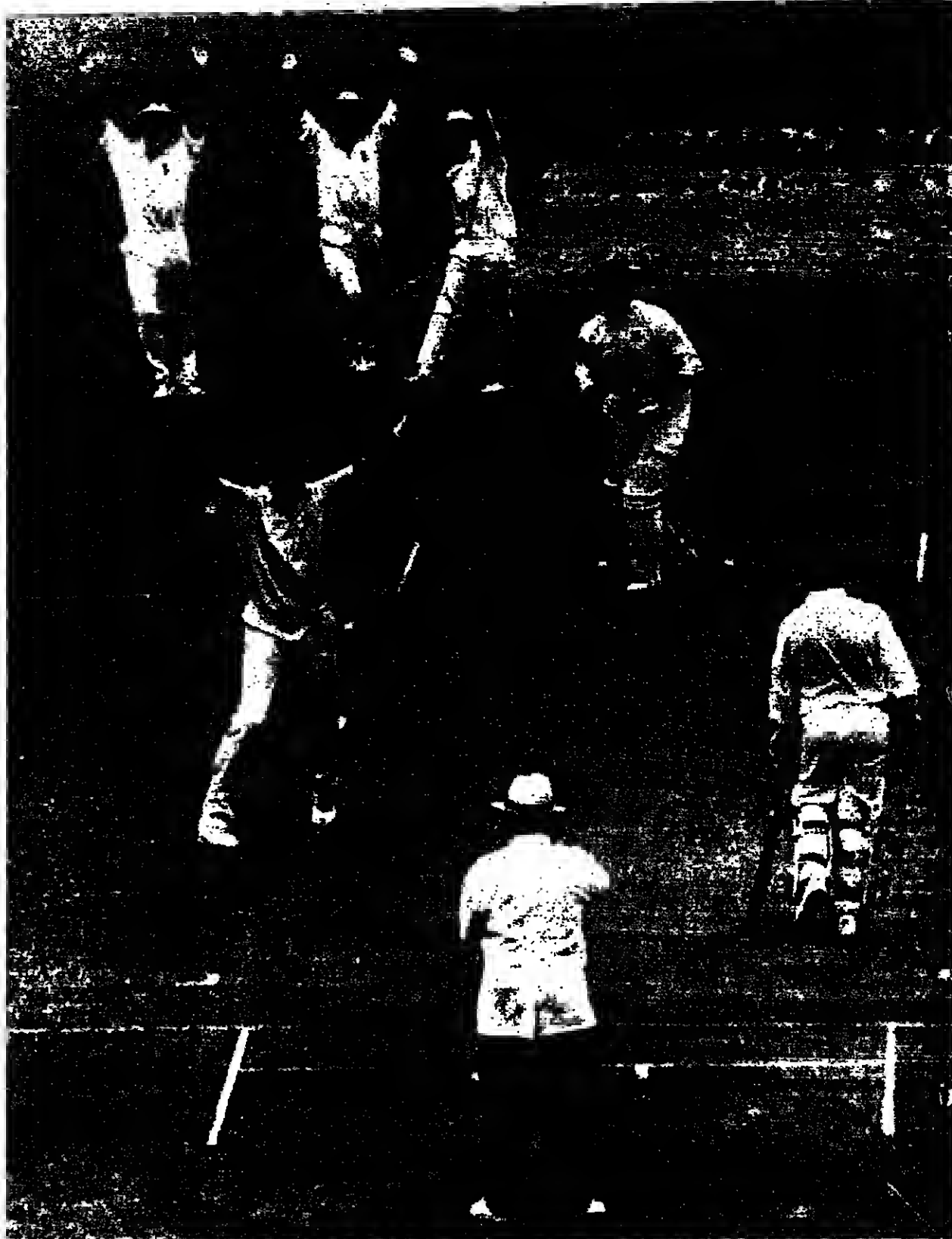
through brought Brian Lara and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, to the crease, any hopes of parting them quickly - Tufnell got a scuttler past Lara's outside edge - were dashed when another bout of rainfall arrived to send the batsmen running for cover.

In some ways it was a bonus that play took place at all and when Atherton and his men turned up at the ground in the morning, the scene that greeted - rain and a ground covered with plastic sheeting - them was more akin to Manchester than an island in the Caribbean.

When he first started at Lancashire, Atherton was a renowned weather spotter who rejoiced in watching rain fall. Yesterday, with a captain's concern, he watched grim faced as ground-staff pattered about mopping up the first significant rain to fall in Barbados since November.

In this hi-tech age of water hogs and underground drainage, the method used to get water off the covers bordered on the farcical. Dressed in fetching yellow anoraks, several groundstaff would soak up the excess with mobile sponge mops before emptying the contents into a lone wheelbarrow, which would then be taken to the boundary edge and emptied. Unsurprisingly with about two acres of covers to mop up, it was a time-consuming process.

With only the most optimistic West Indies supporters claiming that rain was, in fact, saving England, the delays ate away precious time, time only West Indies could afford to waste.



England's Andy Caddick traps Philo Wallace leg before in Bridgetown yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Bridgetown scoreboard

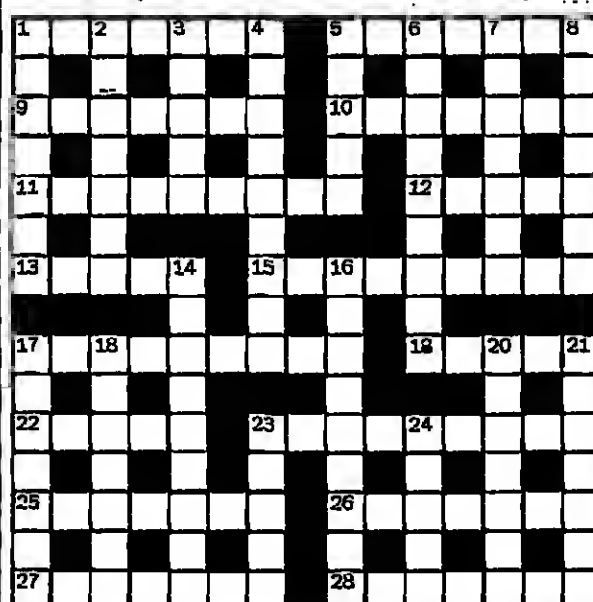
West Indies first innings	262	(44 overs)
England first innings	403	(88 overs)
West Indies second innings	112	(24 overs)
England second innings	233	(54 overs)
West Indies bowlers		
W. H. Edwards	10	(10 overs)
C. G. Lambert	10	(10 overs)
S. Chanderpaul	10	(10 overs)
B. Lara	10	(10 overs)
A. Caddick	10	(10 overs)
England bowlers		
A. Caddick	10	(10 overs)
D. Headley	10	(10 overs)
S. Broad	10	(10 overs)
M. Atherton	10	(10 overs)
G. Hogg	10	(10 overs)

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3568, Tuesday 17 March

By Andrew

Monday's Solution



PRIVATE AMOUNT
IN CANAL SUBSIDISE
A E D Y U L O S
STRAWGEM OSTIA
S C O M M
UNICE IMPRECISE
T N E N
FLYWEIGHT ADJUG
L S S U E C
ASSBT BILATERAL
T H R R A U A L
OPERATION MILE
O E I D C N I I G
TERENCE ENPIATE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Skilled worker makes a stair now (7)
 - 5 A sphere of liquidity naturally (7)
 - 9 As good as anti? Could be (7)
 - 10 Support one in misdeeds (7)
 - 11 Preoccupation with outside broadcast conference (9)
 - 12 Keeping Los Angeles for Spanish is pivotal (5)
 - 13 In forbidden territory you must have had to do this (5)
 - 15 Flashing lamp on railway going over river is exactly as it should be (9)
 - 17 Clarify advice which smelters could find acceptable (6,3)
 - 19 Something a bit extra about new hair treatment (5)
 - 22 Creature shy about sitting on a horse (3)
 - 23 Sour type has seafood before dessert (4,5)
 - 25 Cooked teas at one will do more than fill (7)
 - 26 Some quite miserable list (7)
 - 27 Suggesting younger type with no idea of time? (7)
 - 28 Feature of uniform alien to English man (7)
- DOWN**
- 1 A hit with poem is fashionable (1,2,4)
 - 2 Flier secures right answer for movement of goods (7)
 - 3 Natural light is filtering up into cavity (5)
 - 4 Hard fruit given minister is not potentially proper food (9)
 - 5 Show condescension in Hamlet, we hear (5)
 - 6 Women as a body press for decorative material (9)
 - 7 What royalty need is a drink sent up about one (7)
 - 8 Alfred comes in to take plunder from horse (7)
 - 14 Create due changes in characters? (2,7)
 - 16 Space's shape is changing to produce stress (9)
 - 17 If such, could be a sort of plant (7)
 - 18 Baby needs still to come in fresh (7)
 - 20 A time of success in organising Latin for marriage (7)
 - 21 Spain allowed to clap people in iron? (7)
 - 23 Revolutionary on ship in which mate plays an important role (5)
 - 24 Where a fight could take place about name in Alcoholics Anonymous (5)

Lee leaves City with attack on club's managers

Football

By Alan Nixon

FRANCIS LEE'S turbulent reign at Manchester City's chairman ended yesterday for "personal, family and business reasons". The millionaire and former City striker, who was swept to power by popular support four years ago, was driven out by spectator discontent as the club sit perilously in the First Division's relegation zone.

He went with a withering swipe at the Maine Road managers who he claimed have wasted millions on poor players and criticised the people inside the club who "have tried to blacken my name".

The 53-year-old Lee resigned as chairman and as a director, leaving his deputy, David Bernstein - a life-long supporter who heads the clothing chain French Connection - in charge. Dennis Fieart, another former City player, becomes director of football, with John Wardle, the boss of JD Sports, joining the board.

Lee paid £3m for a 29.9 per cent stake in City in February 1994. Eight managers and £30m spent on players later, they are facing relegation to the Second Division for the first time in their history - a struggle which still draws 30,000 crowds.

"My family life, personal life and business life have been severely disrupted by events over the past few months to such

an extent that it has become impossible and impractical for me to carry on," Lee said in a statement.

"As a player I took great pride in playing for Manchester City and I was also very proud to have become chairman. Consequently, over the last four years I have tried very hard to create a situation where everyone would be proud, pleased and privileged to be associated with Manchester City.

"I feel I have done my very best for the club. However many improvements are made off the field it is the improvements on it for which the chairman is judged. I leave with my integrity and character intact."

Lee did not single out indi-

vidual managers, but the bulk of signings under his chairmanship were made by Alan Ball and Frank Clark. "We have not bought quality and organised them right. It has not worked for us on the pitch," Lee said. "The purchase of players have not been worth the value we have paid for them, with the odd exception like Georgi Kinkladze."

He denied that he had interfered with team selection. "I have been accused of all kinds of things which are totally untrue," he said. "There are, behind the scenes at Maine Road, some very insincere people, who have tried to blacken my name. There were enemies within and without."

Bernstein, who was brought

into the club by Lee, offered a quick remedy and stressed that the club will have to cut their cloth according to their finances.

"I know the tension that the supporters feel. I feel exactly the same way, absolutely awful," he said. "We will give it everything."

However, he suggested the possibility of standing aside if new money was forthcoming and many observers feel his spell as chairman will be short-lived. Mike McDonald, the Sheffield United chairman, has been pushing for a stake in City for some time.

The position of the manager, Joe Royle, who was appointed in February, appears secure.

Maine line to nowhere page 28

Wright outburst may still lead to court case

POLICE have completed their investigation into an alleged outburst at fans by the Arsenal striker Ian Wright following the club's 3-1 home defeat by Blackburn last December.

Scotland Yard officers, who took a host of statements from supporters following the game at Highbury, could have thrown out the case but they decided to submit a file to the Crown Prosecution Service at the end of last week for advice on whether there is enough evidence for Wright to be charged and forced to undergo a court case, Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday.

The CPS could now take a couple of weeks or even months

to rule on the case yet Wright is likely to know the outcome of their deliberations by the end of the season.

The England striker is alleged to have launched a tirade of abuse at supporters from the window of his team's dressing-room after the game on 13 December.

Blackburn's manager, Roy Hodgson, plans to sign Coventry's Dion Dublin in a £5m deal this week - if Gordon Strachan's men go out of the FA Cup tonight. Hodgson has already

made a move for Dublin and is willing to pay the asking price.

The Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, who tore a hamstring in his side's 1-0 defeat against Arsenal on Saturday, was none the less named as a non-playing member of Denmark's 18-man squad for their friendly against Scotland in Glasgow on 25 March.

The Wales chairman, Jeff Bonser, has resigned following demonstrations by fans against him at Saturday's game at

Grimsby. Bonser said he would be putting the club up for sale.

Southampton have signed the teenage striker Cosimo Salvi on loan from the Italian Second Division side Torino until the end of the season.

The QPR defender Keith Rowland has withdrawn from the Northern Ireland squad to face Slovakia at Windsor Park on 25 March because his thigh wound will not heal in time.

Wycombe have confirmed Neil Smillie as manager until the

end of the season. Smillie took over as caretaker manager when John Gregory was appointed Aston Villa manager.

Colin Todd, the Bolton manager, signed Swiss striker Gac-tano Giallanza last night to help the club's relegation fight. The under-21 international signed on loan for the rest of the season from the French side Nantes.

Police are studying a video of crowd trouble which marred Cheltenham Town's FA Trophy match with Hayes at the weekend. A hundred fans invaded the pitch after Cheltenham had won the game with the only goal minutes from the end.

Newcastle disunited, page 4

spanish inquisition?

aston villa vs atletico madrid from 7:30pm tonight on 5

سورة من القرآن